PARTISAN REVIEW

PR

WINTER, 1939:

JOHN DOS PASSOS
Red, White and Blue Thanksgiving

ANDRE GIDE — Pages from My Journal

HAROLD ROSENBERG
The World of Thomas Mann

DWIGHT MACDONALD
Soviet Society and its Cinema

LIONEL TRILLING
Hemingway and his Critics

R. P. BLACKMUR — Nine Poets

LEON TROTSKY — Letter to André Breton

WILLIAM GRUEN
What Is Logical Empiricism?

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ALLEN TATE · WILLIAM STEPHENS · FRANZ KAFKA · ELIZABETH BISHOP · ERNEST NAGEL · GERTRUDE STEIN · CLEMENT GREENBERG · THEODORE ROETHKE · DELMORE SCHWARTZ

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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

Edited by

D. W. Harding, F. R. Leavis, L. C. Knights, Denys Thompson

The DECEMBER number of SCRUTINY *(Vol. VII, No. 3) contains, among other things*

"The New Republic" and the Ideal Weekly — *by H. A. Mason*

Henry James's Heiress: The Importance of Edith Wharton — *by Q. D. Leavis*

"The Great and Good Corneille" — *by Martin Turnell*

"Troilus and Cressida" — *by D. A. Traversi*

Revaluations (XI): Arnold as Critic — *by F. R. Leavis*

Comments and Reviews:

Ivor Gurney and the English Art-Song — *by W. H. Mellers*

The Press — *by H. A. Mason*

Mr. Chase on Meaning — *by James Smith*

The Significance of Kafka — *by R. O. C. Winkler*

Auden and Isherwood — *by T. R. Barnes*

"Human Nature" in Society — *by F. C. Tinkler*

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PARTISAN REVIEW

A QUARTERLY OF LITERATURE AND MARXISM

Volume VI, No. 2 Winter 1939

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COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES:

DEMOCRACY AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT, by Sidney Hook

JOHN DEWEY, by Eliseo Vivas

THE THEATRE GOES AMERICAN, by Mary McCarthy

THE ONLY SON, a story by James T. Farrell

THEORIES OF SOCIETY, an omnibus review by Lewis Corey

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This Quarter

THE CRISIS IN FRANCE

As Athens was called by the ancients the 'eye' of Greece, in the sense that there centered the supreme consciousness of Greek civilization, so Paris might be called the 'eye' of modern European civilization. For a century the history of France was the history of European politics: from the great revolution of 1789 to the 1848 'year of revolutions', the proto-fascist reaction of 'Napoleon the Little,' and finally the Paris Commune of 1871, which sketched out a whole new theory of revolution, to be realized in 1917. ("Well and good, gentlemen," wrote Engels, "do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.") So, too, in arts and letters. The current of modern art, from Cézanne to Picasso, has been channelled deep in Paris. And it was to Paris, not to Berlin or London or Rome, that our own literary expatriates of the twenties went to write their novels and publish their independent 'little' magazines. In that benign and quickening air, the expression of the best integrated culture of modern times, the *avant-garde*—the very term is French—in art and literature has found it least impossible to survive.

Now all this is threatened. The eye of Western culture is dimming. For months now, the newspaper correspondents have been filling in, bit by bit, the now sadly familiar image of a nation that is preparing to take leave of democratic government. We know well by now what happens to intellectual life under a totalitarian regime. If France goes fascist, we shall be saying goodbye to Western culture in all seriousness and for a long time to come.

But the battle is not yet lost. It is true that two and a half years of the disastrous 'People's Front' policy has led to the Munich Pact and the openly reactionary Daladier government, and that the morale of the masses is being sapped by the same events that are strengthening the will to power of the two hundred families. But French fascism is, as yet, weak as an organized movement, and the direction of the Daladier government appears to be reactionary rather than fascist. As our Paris correspondent, Mr. Sean Niall,

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puts it on page 103 of this issue: "Daladier bears a more sinister resemblance to one Heinrich Brüning than to the Napoleon Bonaparte he apparently fancies himself to be."

The French masses still have a respite left them—several months, a year, even two, perhaps—in which to set in motion the only kind of anti-fascist struggle that can succeed: a revolutionary struggle against the whole capitalist order. The nucleus of such a movement already exists, in such militant left-wing organizations as the Lutte de Classe, a semi-syndicalist trade union group, the Pivert group (PSOP), which split off last summer from the Socialist Party of France, and the International Workers Party (POI), affiliated with the Fourth International. If a serious revolutionary opposition to fascism crystallizes around these groups, it will need and should get all the sympathy and all the material aid that we in this country who are concerned for the future of European culture and democracy can give to it.

ANTI-FASCIST JITTERBUG

Mr. Lewis Mumford's essay on Spengler in the *New Republic* of January 11 would make an ideal contribution to an anthology of writings by the anti-fascist jitterbugs who are nowadays providing the liberal periodicals with their thrills and throbs. We are aware, of course, that Mr. Mumford is what is popularly known as a "man of good will", that is to say, he belongs to that advanced school of backward thinkers who have converted the Christmas spirit into a philosophy of history. Therefore we were not at all surprised to see him turning into a jitterbug under our very eyes. The modern situation demands it.

Now that the post-war era is definitely behind us and we are again stumbling in a pre-war fog, "men of good will" are called upon by the reactionary *Zeitgeist* to fulfill their historic mission. It is only proper that they should take it upon themselves to furnish cultural sanctions for the second world-conflict between the imperialist powers. In the afore-mentioned essay Mr. Mumford does his bit for democracy by proclaiming the "pathology of the German mind" to be the "sinister world-problem" of our time. This mind, don't you see, has something "deeply irrational" at its basis: naturally, it is responsible for Hitlerism, of which Spengler was the prophet. In the past it produced such intellectual hobgoblins as Treitschke, Houston Chamberlain, and . . . Fichte, Hegel, Wagner. Thus, without so much as an apologetic gesture, Mr. Mumford reverts to the Hun-baiting of 1914-1918.

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Needless to say, Mr. Mumford is horrified by the racial doctrines of the Nazis; but his horror by no means prevents him from sliding into the national mysticism that inspires these doctrines. If the Nazis deduce Bolshevism from the nature of the Jewish mind, Mr. Mumford deduces fascism from the nature of the German mind; and, by implication, he advises us to operate on the diseased Teutonic brain with the sharp instruments employed only two decades ago with so much success by such celebrated doctors of democracy as Czar Nicholas, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Woodrow Wilson.

Once an anti-fascist is far gone in jitterbuggery, he suffers a total loss of memory. But Mr. Mumford improves upon most of the jitterbugs by raising amnesia to the level of a principle. He is simply oblivious to the fact that besides poets and philosophers of imperialist conquest, German culture also nurtured the socialist humanism of Marx and Engels. He simply *will* not remember that the things he is now saying about the German people have been for years commonly considered to be the intellectual obscenities of a period of war-delirium. He simply cannot recall that far from being an invention of the vicious German mind, fascism came to power in Italy fully ten years before President Hindenburg, the democratic candidate of all the Mumfords of Weimar Germany, handed over the state to Adolf Hitler. He simply is unable to recollect that before Hitler applied unstinted terror to curb the masses, the German proletariat, as a class, at no time supported any but anti-fascist political parties. And it seems to have entirely escaped him that since fascist tendencies are growing in virtually every country—with the working people everywhere resisting such tendencies and the bourgeois classes, as a whole or in part, encouraging them—it is plainly unreasonable to explain fascism on national instead of on class grounds.

How are we to account for Mr. Mumford's wild statements? Is it that he is an ignorant and irresponsible person? No, such a characterization would be as simple-minded on our part as it would be unfair to him. Neither national nor individual qualities expose the sources of Mr. Mumford's obscurantist opinions. The only way to account for them is to understand their operational logic, namely, the political uses to which they are put in the present period of war-preparedness. Obviously Mr. Mumford is not a hermit-thinker meditating in a lonely hut on the eternal problems of being and becoming. In the real social world he plays the part of a spokesman for the liberal intelligentsia. This group, after some light-minded adventuring with radical ideas, is now re-engaging itself to conservative interests. Its members must now at all costs forget everything they

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know about the true relations obtaining between capitalism, fascism, and war. Hence Mr. Mumford and his friends cannot assail fascism for what it is but must picture it as some vast and mysterious irrational, or as the dreadful aberration of a particular national mentality. This has become all the more necessary now, as the New Deal government—of which the anti-fascist jitterbugs are enthusiastic partisans—is scuttling its domestic program of mild social reforms and rapidly moving into the war zone. After all, if people understood that fascism is no less than the latent barbarism of our declining social system coming into the open, as in fact the *normal* state of this system when in order to save itself it must do away with all democratic institutions, why—then it might be rather difficult to persuade them of the ideal value of fighting a new war to save what we saved last time and look at it!

T. S. ELIOT'S LAST WORDS

We are glad to see that, twenty-eight years after T. S. Eliot's graduation from Harvard, *The Harvard Advocate* has honored him with a special number. We are sorry to learn that *The Criterion,* the distinguished review which Eliot has edited since 1922, is ceasing publication as of January, 1939. We are aware of no special significance in this conjunction of events; and although the current *Advocate* reads in part like a well-written obituary, and Eliot himself, in his "Last Words" in the *Criterion,* is more than ever the Old Roman pronouncing his own funeral oration, it is plainly not the occasion for definitive farewells. Eliot is still living, he is still productive, his play, *The Family Reunion,* is at present on the press, and everyone is waiting for it.

What is of interest, however, is the set of reasons advanced by Eliot for discontinuing *The Criterion* at this time. "During the autumn," he tells us, ". . . the prospect of war had involved me in hurried plans for suspending publication; and in the subsequent *detente* I became convinced that my enthusiasm for continuing the editorial work did not exist." Yet only in an immediate sense may *The Criterion* be regarded as a casualty of the September crisis. "A feeling of staleness," "a depression of spirits" had been gathering head in the editor for a considerable time. And as he reviews the magazine's past, in "Last Words", we discover why; for the history of the magazine is the history of Eliot himself in his capacity as an intellectual leader. Founded four years after the Armistice, *The Criterion* proposed to continue the tradition of the great pre-war re-

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views of Paris, Berlin, Madrid; it should try to provide London with "a local forum of international thought." But from about the year 1926 "one began slowly to realize that the intellectual and artistic output of the previous seven years had been rather the last efforts of an old world, than the first struggles of a new." The subsequent history of *The Criterion* was one of ground lost to an emergent social crisis, of retreats forced by the obvious disintegration of old Europe. The magazine began to print material of an economic and political character; it published the work of the radical younger generation; it became thoroughly eclectic. And meanwhile the editor became less and less the partisan of one line of thinking, more and more the grave apostle of detachment. Now Eliot's decision to discontinue the magazine would appear to signify his conviction that the principle of detachment, like his militant religious humanism of the past, has, as he remarks of *The Criterion* itself, "served its purpose." In other countries the literary humanists have been forced into physical exile. In England, if Eliot's decision is a symptom, they are preparing to retire into voluntary seclusion.

There are many reasons why *The Criterion* will be missed. It published the work of young writers and paid them well; its reviews and chronicles were the most informative of their kind in English. But the influence of *The Criterion* in these latter days has not been constructive. It is one thing for Eliot himself to cultivate abstraction from worldly issues; this is, paradoxically, the concession to reality of a platonic reactionary who is also a great poet of modern experience. But to English intellectuals the plea for aloofness came as a dry wind to the drought-stricken. Detachment? They were already perishing of it! In the latest and last number of *The Criterion* there are—to use a favored *Criterion* word—some "amusing" examples of the almost monumental futility of the intellectual products of the British *rentier* system. Thus a reviewer of Edmund Wilson's *The Triple Thinkers* remarks: "This is not to say that I can quite accept Mr. Wilson's interpretation of *The Turn of the Screw;* I am, perhaps wrongly, inclined to shy at Freud when he is brought into the field of literary criticism." Shying at Freud, this nervous critic, when he is confronted by politics, can only attempt the kind of snub exploited by Eliot around 1921. Of Wilson's analysis of a Shaw play, he declares: "True, this latter is to show Shaw's drifting political attitudes, but it is difficult to see of what interest these can be to anyone but Shaw." . . . Another writer in the same issue, reviewing American periodicals, remarks generously that he has "nothing but praise for *PARTISAN REVIEW*." He enjoyed reading Leon Trotsky's letter on "Art and Politics"; Trotsky is "one of the few politicians I can

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read with pleasure"; in fact, "when he is teasing Stalin he is extremely amusing." But this writer fears that the opponents of Stalin are only "armchair critics"; and he inquires, profoundly: "Was there ever a critic who couldn't do better than the man in power?"

We are not going to try to assess the degree to which Eliot is responsible for this sort of frippery from his contributors; and if we were to attempt such an estimate, it would not constitute our last word on Eliot. Let us merely record our regret at the disappearance of *The Criterion,* and our fear that its passing will not alter, for worse or better, the literary situation in England. "It will perhaps need more severe affliction than we have yet experienced," Eliot says, "before life can be renewed."

HELLO, REFORM! In 1931 John Chamberlain wrote a book called *Farewell to Reform,* in which he pronounced a valedictory—backed up by some excellent historical documentation—to reformism as an effective technique for social change in this country. He showed pretty convincingly why Bryan's populism, T.R.'s trust-busting, and Wilson's "New Freedom" had come to naught in the end. Since then, much has happened both to this country and to Mr. Chamberlain. The former has enjoyed six years of the New Deal, and the latter has enjoyed an increasing reputation as a liberal journalist. Not so long ago, Mr. Chamberlain publicly recanted his youthful heresies and publicly hailed the Roosevelt Revolution. The criticisms he once directed against reformism he now, logically enough, turns full blast against Marxism.

For a time, after his recantation, Mr. Chamberlain was merely one more general dealer in scepticism—a commodity that is finding a ready sale among liberals these days. Lately, however, he seems to have been working towards something which, if it cannot be called a positive program, at least represents a systematization of his doubts. His new slogan, and a most intriguing one, too, is: "Towards a Permanent NEP!" The theory of the permanent NEP is worth examining, less for its intrinsic value, than because of the extraordinary range of its author's journalistic influence. The left liberals he reaches through the *New Republic,* in whose literary section he writes leading reviews. He speaks to the centrist liberals in frequent contributions to *Common Sense.* Every month he communicates with some hundred thousand right liberals via *Harper's,* whose book section he has just taken over. And he talks—though in the muffled tones of well-paid anonymity—to another hundred thousand captains

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of industry every month in the sumptuous pages of *Fortune,* of which he is an associate editor.

The most elaborate exposition of his new theory was an article Mr. Chamberlain published in a recent issue of *Common Sense* under the explicit title: "It's *Your* State." We might note in passing that this magazine's evolution somewhat parallels that of Mr. Chamberlain: starting life in 1932-3 well to the left of the New Deal, it has ended up as one more "critical supporter" of Roosevelt and only slightly to the left of the Communist Party—which it tirelessly denounces as "Marxist". In his article, Mr. Chamberlain denies that the State is necessarily the instrument of a ruling class, and puts forward another theory: that it is rather "a fulcrum to be fought over by rival groups", a neutral agency which can and should "play an effective brokerage role between the claims of owners and non-owners." To better their condition, therefore, the masses need not resort to anything so desperate and unpleasant as the overthrow of the capitalist State. They have only to bring sufficient pressure to bear, and the State will give them all they want. This, indeed, is just what they have been doing since 1932, and Mr. Chamberlain, at least, is well satisfied with the results.

We doubt if the masses are. Living standards may be higher than they were in 1932, but they are still far below 1928. Nor is there much prospect that they will ever be that high again. No amount of political pressure can wring higher wages out of a declining capitalist economy, nor can it force entrepreneurs to employ workers when they see no chance for profits. But the New Deal, we imagine Mr. Chamberlain would answer, puts human welfare before profits, and so the State can be used by the masses to do away with the profit system if they choose. But he forgets that the New Deal is not the *State,* but rather the *Government* which at the moment happens to be operating the State. Governments come and go, but the State—the basic legal framework which defines property relations and provides for courts, policemen, and armies to implement this definition— goes on forever. Or at least until it is shattered by revolution and a new State is erected on its ruins. Mr. Chamberlain, however, assumes a certain neutral, inert, odorless, colorless entity which hovers above the class war, now blessing this side, now that. But the State—our own, at least—is *not* neutral, it is *not* odorless and inert. It reeks of capitalism.

Mr. Chamberlain talks a good deal about politics, but he says practically nothing about economics—a common failing of liberals, by the way. It does not seem to bother him that 20% of the American people have 80% of the American wealth, and will not cheerfully

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part therefrom, New Deal or no New Deal. Nor is he phased by the hard, awkward, granite fact that a capitalist State, such as we live under, is maintained primarily to protect property rights. "The only sound slogan," he writes airily, "is, 'It's *your* State!' For under that slogan you can raise a fighting army; under any other, the war is lost." He means, of course, an army to fight for progress. But the phrase is not a happy one. Mr. Chamberlain is a good anti-fascist, and he is sincerely opposed to a second crusade to make the world safe for democracy. But we predict that when and if fascism or war comes to this country, it will be under just this slogan he thinks is so "sound".

In all this, Mr. Chamberlain in effect is trying to put into theoretical terms the political philosophy of the left-wing of the New Deal. Such attempts are rare among those pragmatic gentry, and Mr. Chamberlain seems to be uneasily conscious that he is transgressing the bounds of good taste. "All this may sound pretty theoretical," he apologizes. The importance of the theory of The Permanent NEP to left New Dealers is that it enables them to support the present *status quo* with a good conscience, and to overlook the fact that any reformist *Government* must work within the limitations of the capitalist *State*. Far from itself being the State, the New Deal has found the State, as represented by the Constitution and the courts, sabotaging even the mild reforms it has attempted. Even if the New Deal is heart and soul for the masses—and we don't agree that it is—when capitalist decline has reached a certain point, it will have to decide whether to defend the capitalist State *at all costs*, or to overthrow it. Not even the President's celebrated smile will then be able to gloss over the blunt choice between fascism and social revolution.

DICTATORSHIP AT COOPER UNION

Few will deny that the normal function of educator and critic should be to lead the public and give sympathetic guidance in any move for progress. In America there is ample indication to the contrary, as the controlling forces seemingly concentrate for the restraint of the few who wish to advance, and only through prolonged struggle can a student or individual approach any adequate understanding of modern culture.

It is doubtless true that in most educational centers the apathy of the student body merits no better than it receives. Yet there are several happy instances to show where pupils have maneuvered their faculty into an acknowledgment of rising cultural trends. For instance,

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it is said that Professor Gropius has not always enjoyed his present degree of security and glamor at Harvard, and that in the beginning it was only student pressure that kept him there at all. Similarly the students at Yale initiated a progressive agitation which secured Mr. Harrison (of Harrison and Fouilloux) as an instructor in the School of Architecture, and they got M. Fernand Léger for a lecture-series as well. It is disheartening, therefore, in the face of these hopeful signs, to come upon the losing battle carried on by students at Cooper Union for the preservation of their courses in modern and abstract painting.

Cooper Union is familiar to most New Yorkers as an antiquated caravanserai on lower Fourth Avenue, huge, dingy, and hideous. Actually it is a large school of Art and Science, handsomely endowed by the Coopers and the Hewitts, which offers completely free tuition to hundreds of acceptable students. It is thus hardly a place where one might expect to find advanced methods of instruction, yet accidents may strike in the most unexpected quarters. So it was that under an indifferent directorship, a couple named Harrison, who had long been making an intelligent study of modern methods in art-instruction, applied for positions on the faculty; their personalities proved agreeable (that being the director's chief criterion), so Mrs. Harrison was given classes in fabric-design, Mr. Harrison in painting. It soon became evident that the new teachers were approaching the problems of plastic creation in a way that was quite new to Cooper Union while the students were interested as they had not been interested before. They attended exhibitions uptown, and began talking to the director of Cézanne, the Cubists, and other painters of whom he had never heard. It is to his credit that he remained open-minded, and supported the Harrisons when they later asked for the services of Mr. Turnbull—ostensibly as an instructor in the technique of tempera-glazing. No one as yet seemed to mind that Turnbull himself was an abstract painter of considerable attainments who had made a study of Bauhaus methods, and proceeded to introduce the mysterious subject of esthetics into his classrooms.

Naturally the Cooper Union students did not proceed to win the Prix de Rome or other Beaux-Art prizes. However, an alert intelligence could have noted more subtle signs of progress. Mrs. Harrison's textile-classes were given a beautiful show at W. & J. Sloane's that won wide and favorable recognition; and at the same time the Museum of Living Art director began advising his friends to attend the annual exhibitions of the Harrison and Turnbull pupils. The Trustees (particularly Mr. J. P. Morgan) eyed the shows with gloomy suspicion, but no one cared very much, as owing to the munif-

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icent endowments they were never called upon to foot any bills. Then suddenly the storm broke. No one knows where it had its beginnings, but a possible prelude might have been the winning of a tax-suit against the city of New York. For Cooper Union, among its other tangible assets, happens to be the owner of the Chrysler Building, on which the Trustees had been busily paying taxes for many years. And now (being a free educational institution) its property should never have been taxable at all, and the city was required to refund hundreds of thousands of dollars into the Cooper Union coffers.

It may have been coincidence, but soon after this advantageous decision the Trustees decided that it was about time to spruce the old place up. They began by looking for a new and more efficient director, and the announcement was soon forthcoming that they had found the very man—one Dr. Burdell, who had been "doing wonders" up at M.I.T. In April the new director visited his future field of operations, and started off with the appointment of a commercial artist of obscure standing as a new head for the art-division. Activities ceased for the summer, and it was not until the middle of their vacation that Messrs. Harrison and Turnbull were astonished to receive some curt announcements that their services were no longer required at Cooper Union. And that was the end as far as they were concerned.

In September the students returned from the holidays, and it is not difficult to sympathize with the ones who had been most deeply concerned with exploring the devious channels of modern painting. Instead of Mr. Harrison they were now confronted with Mr. Ernest Fiene, whose vapid canvases had been occasionally visible further west on Eighth Street. The pupils were put to copying knees and elbows, the vital world of structure and design that they were beginning to appreciate as the bones and foundation of artistic creation was closed for good. To make a long story short the students rebelled. They appealed to the director, to the Trustees, to the Advisory Council; and the suspicion was apparent in some official quarters that perhaps Dr. Burdell was not being strictly accurate when he characterized the dissenters as "just a snobbish little group." But was any one discerning enough to apprehend the truth, that this "snobbish little group" comprised the liveliest and most talented elements in the School? So it was that the powers decreed an adjustment to be inevitably difficult when a new director takes office, and that Dr. Burdell should be given a free hand. And thus ends the history of modern painting at Cooper Union.

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Red, White and Blue Thanksgiving

John Dos Passos

There was the time Uncle Glenn and Aunt Harriet had come to Thanksgiving Dinner. The sizzly smell of the turkey and the spices in the stuffing filled the kitchen every time Mother had opened the oven door to baste. Glenn had helped lay the table in the cramped diningroom of the little apartment and had filled the two china swans with red white and blue candies and, carefully, with only one or two smudges, had printed out the names on the placecards.

Dad had been around the house all morning getting into Mother's way in the kitchen and frowning as he sat bent almost double reading with his green eyeshade on at his desk in the corner of the livingroom. A letter had come from Tyler overseas that morning that had upset Dad a good deal. The letter had said that Tyler wasn't coming home with his outfit but that he had just gotten under the line with his commission at Saumur before the armistice and was going to be sent to Coblenz in the Army of Occupation. Glenn was too excited about Thanksgiving and everybody coming to dinner to pay much attention. He and Mother were attending to everything and Dad was just mooning around now and then pulling at his sandy mustache with that worried look and taking down first one big book and then another from the top of his desk and setting them down on chairs and forgetting to put them back.

Mother in her pink apron with her hair in curlers was leaning over the oven of the gasstove basting the turkey. Glenn was standing beside her with his mouth watering as he watched the little splashes of juice sizzle as they trickled off the kitchenspoon onto the brown tight skin of the turkey. Mother was out of breath. He said couldn't he do that because she'd promised him and Dad she wouldn't do too much. She said never mind darling for him to run around the corner to get the icecream at Etienne's. It was all ordered but she was afraid they wouldn't bring it in time, and twenty-five cents worth of salted almonds, and to be sure to wear his muffler because it was a terribly raw day.

Glenn had run down the three flights of steps two at a time and

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almost fallen on his neck in the lower hall. Outside in the broad streets behind the trees rusty with fall, the waving flags and the bunting showed up bright and candystriped under the gray blustery sky. Down at the end of the street there must have been a parade or something because a marching band was playing "Over There".

In the French candy store on Connecticut Avenue it was warm and smelt of chocolate and baking cake. The fat lady behind the counter gave Glenn the icecream and the salted nuts in a little fancy pink carton tied with ribbons at the top and first thing he knew he'd bought a plaster turkey with little tiny gum-drops in it for seventy-five cents out of his own money. That sort of thing helped to garnish the table, the fat lady agreed in her wheedling French accent. When he got home he ran up the three steep flights of the back stairs and broke breathless into the apartment through the back kitchen door.

Dad was in his shirtsleeves mashing the potatoes and saying Ada he couldn't help feeling bad about the thought of our boy in a uniform strutting around lording it over those miserable defeated Germans. "I'm afraid he'll never be good for anything again." Mother was whispering she could only feel thankful that he was safe. Yes indeed Dad said, when he caught sight of Glenn, in a loud false voice that made nothing seem fun any more, it was a real Thanksgiving day for the Spotswood family all right wasn't it my boy; and then he said for him to help his mother beat the potatoes because he had to change his clothes because the family would soon be coming and it would never do for them to find him like this, they had a poor enough opinion of him as it was. And Glenn set to beating the mashed potatoes with all his might with a big fork while Mother poured in a little milk from a cup. She'd put the mashed potatoes on the stove in a double boiler to keep hot.

My they looked good he'd said, he was so hungry he could eat an elephant, and Mother told him to run along now and brush his hair and wash his hands because they'd soon be there and to tell his father to come and open the oysters.

He'd hardly gotten into his bedroom when the bell rang and he ran to the door and there they were, Uncle Glenn and Aunt Harriet and Lorna. Aunt Harriet and Lorna smelt of perfume and furs and Uncle Glenn smelt of bay rum like a barbershop. They had so many coats and mufflers and furs to hang up that Glenn was still in the coatcloset when cousin Jane and Miss Jenks arrived in tweedy outofdoorslooking overcoats, and everybody was crying out about my dear what a wonderful Thanksgiving it was and the news about Tyler, imagine his coming back an officer and going to the Army of Occupation and maybe he'd have a career in the regular

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army, and when Mother came out of the kitchen in her new silky-ruffly dress and with her hair all curls, there was such squealing and kissing and my dear you look like a schoolgirl and to think that Tyler's a second lieutenant at twenty; and out of it came Uncle Glenn's voice grumbling that Tyler had ought to have gotten his commission before he went over like the other college boys did, but Miss Jenks screeched that Herbert hadn't wanted him to, he'd wanted him to rise from the ranks it was so much more democratic, and she thought it was splendid.

Mother said for Glenn to go help Dad bring in the oysters and Uncle Glenn followed into the kitchen where Dad was standing by the sink. Dad had a couple of plates of oysters ready but he'd jabbed himself in the palm of the hand with the oysterknife and was standing there looking down with that slow puzzled look he had at a little drop of dark blood swelling up in the palm of his hand.

Uncle Glenn roared that it was too bad Herbert and that he'd ought to use a leather mitt, and grabbed the oysterknife out of Dad's hand, and started to open the oysters at a great rate while Dad and Glenn carried the plates into the diningroom, where the table had every leaf in it and they'd hung paper festoons round the electric light fixture that Mother always said was so ugly. Glenn went around straightening the old linen tablecloth with its stiff creases and Mother's best silver spoons and forks that had belonged to grandmama Carroll. Uncle Glenn caught him at it and slapped him on the back so hard it hurt, and said he was darned if they hadn't turned little Glenn into a regular parlor maid, so that Glenn blushed and went out in the back hall and stood looking out the window at the garbage cans and the spilt ashes in the yard where there was still an oak all golden with fall and a scraggly privet bush with green leaves on it. Somebody had stuck a faded paper American flag at the top of the privet bush.

When Glenn got back they were all at their places and Dad was standing still with his eyes drooping waiting to say grace. As soon as they'd sat down Aunt Harriet said now dear Ada mustn't do another thing she was afraid she'd overdone. Mother shook her head, but she did look pale instead of looking flushed like she had in the kitchen. Her voice sounded tired when she said she'd so looked forward to having everybody at her house this Thanksgiving so that they could be happy with her because she was so happy and tears began to run down her cheeks.

Well now the Huns would get what was coming to them, Uncle Glenn said. He was lifting an oyster dripping with cocktail sauce into his fat mouth. He smacked his lips and said he for one hoped they'd

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hang the Kaiser and burn Berlin to the ground, teach 'em a lesson, that was all they understood.

Two wrongs didn't make a right; Dad was speaking his carefully pronounced words from the end of the table, when Lorna began to kick up a row because she'd found an oystercrab in her oyster. Uncle Glenn roared that she must eat it and Glenn said he thought they were cute and Lorna screeched that they were horrid and Glenn said nothing in Nature was horrid, they were just cute little pink crabs that lived in the oysters. Lorna dared him and double-dared him to eat it and poked it across the table at him on her spoon. The tiny crab crawled a little on his tongue but he crunched it up and swallowed it. Then Lorna kicked him in the shins under the table and said now she thought he was horrid.

Uncle Glenn got red in the face laughing and spilt cocktail sauce on his chin gulping down his oysters so that it looked like he'd cut himself shaving. He said he didn't think the younger generation appreciated oysters, so he distributed Lorna's oysters among the grownups and Glenn lost some of his oysters too though he liked them fine. When Uncle Glenn had eaten his last oyster, he pushed back his chair a little and Aunt Harriet made him wipe the cocktail sauce off his chin and he declared that nothing in the world could beat a Potomac oyster. But now that we'd won the war the Huns would have to pay for it, he said looking straight at Dad. Mother and Cousin Jane were fluttering around taking away the plates.

Dad got that cornered look on his face. He took off his glasses and rubbed his grey bulging eyes and leaned forward across his plate before he spoke. He hoped that those really responsible for the war would be made to pay for it instead of the poor people of Germany who were its first victims, he said, his voice trembling a little; he had confidence that the President . . . Cousin Jane came to the door and said in her businesslike way that Herbert must come help them with the turkey, they were afraid they'd drop it; it was so heavy and wasn't little Glenn coming to act as head waiter so that his poor mother could sit down and entertain her guests a little.

When Glenn was through passing the vegetable with a napkin on his arm like a real waiter, he sat down and began to eat. Oh, she hoped the turkey wasn't dry, Mother kept saying as she watched Dad shakily carving. Everybody was eating the turkey and saying how good the stuffing was and please pass the cranberry sauce or the piccalilli and it wasn't until the second helping had gone around that Uncle Glenn started to argue with Dad some more. Of course Uncle Glenn said, he was for backing the President, but he thought the leniency shown to conscientious objectors and disloyal elements

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in this country was a scandal. Dad flared up and said did he call twenty years in jail lenient when the Constitution . . . Uncle Glenn interrupted that that kind of talk was disloyal at a time like this when our boys were giving their lives to defend the very principles . . . "After all, Brother Glenn, Tyler's our son," Mother said with a shy smile, "and we ought to know about sacrifice." Then she told little Glenn to clear the table and bring in the icecream. She said for Lorna to help him but Lorna didn't move.

When he brought back the icecream it slithered back and forth on the platter. Cousin Jane who was following with a silver sauceboat of chocolate fudge sauce cried, "Whoops my boy," in her jolly way that made him feel good again. But Uncle Glenn was still talking about how pacifism was giving aid and comfort to the enemy and at a time like this . . . Dad looked very pale and stern and was spacing his words slowly and saying that after all that he'd spent his life in the study of the gospels and the teachings of the Master and had done his best to apply them to modern conditions, not through the dogmas of any particular church, he realized that a great deal of dogma was out of date and rather obscured the gospels than clarified them . . . Then he said his voice shaking again that he could find no justification for a Christian to take part in war and that he thought the application of Christianity to war was not only spiritual but practical.

Uncle Glenn pushed back his chair and got very red and said he hadn't come to listen to a sermon but in his opinion all pacifists were yellow. "Glenn, Glenn, now you promised me you wouldn't," Aunt Harriet was whining in a singsong voice. Cousin Jane added in her snappy cheerful tone that this was Thanksgiving dinner and that arguing at meals gave people indigestion.

"Herbert, don't argue with him, please," Mother whispered down the table, and made Glenn get Uncle Glenn's plate and gave him another helping of icecream. It made Glenn feel awful to see how her hand was trembling when she poured out the chocolate sauce. "I should think his own sons would be ashamed," Uncle Glenn muttered as he helped himself to another piece of fruitcake.

Lorna started giggling as Aunt Harriet kept hissing hush across the table. Uncle Glenn went on rumbling in his throat that it was a surprise to him Herbert hadn't been arrested before this for his disloyal utterances and us with him for listening to 'em.

Dad had gotten to his feet leaving his icecream with the bitter fudge sauce untouched on his plate. "After all Glenn you are my guest and Ada's." He walked over to the window and stood there looking out with his thin hands clasped behind his back.

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"Mercy," broke out Miss Jenks who hadn't said much during dinner because her new set of false teeth bothered her, but had sat there with her little bright lined face munching fast like a rabbit. "You wouldn't think the war was over would you?"

Then Aunt Harriet suggested Glenn take his little cousin Lorna for a walk around the zoo. Lorna pushed her face out in a big pout and said she hated the old zoo but all the aunts and cousins thought it was a lovely idea and Uncle Glenn gave them a half dollar to buy peanuts for the elephant with and they were bundled up and shooed out of the house into the chilly twilight of the streets.

Simple Progression

I. *THE MILL*

Looking and listening with eye and ear
for birds, alive in woods we've seldom seen;
going with every season of the year,
we have had just that sidewalk glimpse of green
one gets in passing by. Early and late,
in sun or when rain dripped from boughs and eaves,
we've tried to carry through the clockhouse gate
our thoughts of grass, our memories of leaves.

II. *THE SKY*

That is our sunset of which we are justly proud:
a fourcolor film projected on air and cloud,
a continent-length mirage, a barrage of news—
grander, I sometimes think, than a rainbow's hues
that curve to a pot of gold or a Comstock Lode.
Time prints a lithograph now where the rainbow showed:
yellow, red, violet, green, it becomes terrific
before its colors dissolve in the dark Pacific.

WILLIAM STEPHENS

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Myth and History

Harold Rosenberg

"Both (democracy and dictatorship) are illogical. But which form of illogical thinking is the more decent?"
Thomas Mann—*The Coming Victory of Democracy*

Politics and the Values of Art

Thomas Mann presents himself today before huge middle class audiences as the champion of a higher standpoint from which to decide political and social questions. These platform appeals, supported by magazine articles, newspaper interviews, and the volume, *The Coming Victory of Democracy,* come with the authority of a life-long rumination on the subject of human values; and their convincingness is further heightened by the circumstance that for the sake of his principles their author is a voluntary exile from his native land.

Mann has seen in the abdication and beating down of the individual mind the basic catastrophe of modern times. His introduction to the German émigré magazine, *Measure and Value* (*Mass und Vert*), carefully summing up his political theory, is a rallying cry to individuals in the name of their cultural independence and creative will. It is the direct response of the sentiment of artistic culture to political utilitarianism. Asserting that culture is menaced with destruction by Pure Politics, Mann sees it rising to save itself by its own action and self-affirmation. And the central force in this cultural subjugation of politics is the individual.

Mann's thesis begins by counterposing culture's measure and value to "revolutionary propaganda," whose essence and power seem to him to lie in just that relinquishment of individual thinking which in his novels are a familiar condition of the lovelorn and the hypnotized. "Measure and value," says Mann, are words taken "from the world of art," a world far removed from the "scabby, herd-minded world" which is so willing to yield itself to the momentary intoxication of slogans. Art is the opposite of revolutionary propaganda.

Yet the world of art, while it is removed, is not isolated; it is no mountain peak of the purely esthetic. For art is measure in the real

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world, where it "becomes more than simply a test in matters of taste, and pronounces upon values far beyond esthetic ones, antecedent and fundamental to these."

Propaganda promises a total renovation of life. The declaration EVERYTHING MUST BE CHANGED flashed on Berlin electric signs, and the gates to power opened before Hitler. But against these lying promises of utter novelty, the artist, says Mann, asserts a different principle of change, a law whose characteristic it is that it does not alter without preserving, that it forever combines the new with the old, the original with the traditional. It is—to sum up in a phrase Goethe's image of the new eternally emerging from the "expanded elements" of the old—the law of revolutionary traditionalism. Art is revolutionary, as any creative act is revolutionary—but the revolution of art is the model of *conservative revolution.*

Unfortunately, however, Mann continues, this ideal of conservative revolution, and even the phrase itself, has been perverted by the Nazis into its opposite*—the outworn and decadent have been preserved through terror, while the "forces imperative to life" have been held at bay. It is thus that the "infamous pragmatism" of totalitarian politics triumphed in Germany. Politics subjected everything to itself, and trampled under foot culture and the free human spirit, opposing itself, too, to Christianity, upon which, Mann insists, all Western values are based . . .

For religion is the individual urge towards perfection. Religious redemption lies, it is true, in the hereafter. But the religious spirit can also seek a better life on earth. Religion, thinks Mann, is not inconsistent with socialism, provided socialism is not restricted to narrow Marxist doctrine with its class-dynamic interpretation of cultural creation and its lack of understanding of the freedom from class of great men. In contrast with the materialist interpretation of history, the socialism of the religious humanist rests on the "broader convictions" that the "inner life," culture, individual metaphysics and religion, will not scorn "the politico-social sphere" but will intervene in and bring meaning to earthly events. Thus will political and economic forces be subdued and brought into harmony with cultural progress.

On this "broad" program Mann hopes to unite "many people in many countries" in whom, he is confident, the craving for measure

* The fascists do in fact make much use of this conception of change: A *Times* dispatch from Spain contains the following: "They (the fascist Requetes) term themselves traditionalists . . . although their faith is oddly mingled with modern conceptions of the corporate or syndicalist State as a substitute for both capitalism and socialism. It seems true that on Generalissimo Francisco Franco's side the war is a kind of religious revival, but at the same time it is or may become a social revolution in which tradition is coupled with reform."

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and value is still strong. "Fascism is going out of fashion as a mode of thought." To humanity and freedom belong the future!

Such, in sum, is Mann's eloquent counterstatement to the partisans of political automatism to whom all cultural change appears as the mechanical reflex of political activism, while politics itself, detached from the movement of culture and thought, becomes *l'art pur* of Party leaders.

Three major political judgments emerge from Mann's theory of "conservative revolution": 1. That the mass dissemination of revolutionary ideas, regardless of their truth or falsehood, constitutes a "lying propaganda" which must lead to the destruction of culture and individual development. 2. That the defeat of the Nazis will be the result of a cultural act of conservation, restoring social equilibrium through the revival of Christianity and individual metaphysics—though this may require some physical assistance on the part of the Democratic nations, which, of course, represent these principles. 3. That the socialist order will be attained through culture itself without the aid of, and even in conflict with, Marxism and the materialist analysis of history.

In view of the seriousness of these judgments, it becomes necessary to examine the origin and meaning of Mann's "values of Art" and the method by which he attempts the solution of historical problems. Specifically, we must endeavor to learn what he means by the freedom and creative power of the individual in the modern world, and what supports the process of change he calls conservative revolution. His attitude towards science is also important in determining why he makes no distinction between true and false "propaganda". To estimate the solidity of Mann's thought, we must return to the general philosophy of values upon which his writings are based.

The Analogical Technique— An Introduction to Modern Myth-Making

Mann's narrative method is something more than the manner of a school or the individual technique of a great artist. In the larger sense, it belongs to a type of research and speculation that has been extremely influential in recent years. Any one familiar with the writings of Freud and his disciples is aware of the vogue for symbolic interpretation and analogical patterning in contemporary thought. The degree to which a myth-making impulse dominates Mann's novels was stressed by William Troy in his recent essays in *Partisan Review.*

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Had he correctly estimated the nature of these mythological operations, Troy could have clarified Mann's contribution. Unfortunately, however, the critic succumbed to the writer he was analyzing, and his study became little more than a rewording of Mann's own pretensions towards the dialectics of the Absolute. Troy failed to notice that what Mann achieves is not The Myth, with "its immemorial pattern," but a specific methodology for converting all happenings into a special kind of fable. It is not in his eternal truths that Mann is a master mythologist, not in his access to a level above time and change, but in his artistic building with the materials of contemporary belief.

In its philosophy, present day myth-making is associated with a sense of the limitation of science as the foundation for an understanding of reality. In attempting to surpass these limits, the modern imagination turns to the counter-concept of mystery and creation; it takes account of religious belief, in order to contrast its effects upon man's relations to the universe with those of science. In so doing, however, its purpose is essentially philosophical rather than ritualistic —it does not aim to immerse itself in a transcendental experience. For this reason it is not possible to evaluate such myths as Mann's from "the mythological point of view"; nor to find in his work a trace of primitive dynamic or dialectic. To understand his writings means to understand their System.

Modern thought poses in a thousand different forms the opposition between science and the irrational—between the known and the living. In literature and painting this contradiction has developed esthetic content as a more or less organized symbolism of the Monumental and the Organic—e.g., statues, machines, geometrical abstractions, contrasted with sex, dreams, biomorphic shapes. In literary criticism it rises to the surface as the problems of Tradition versus individual novelty, Values versus Experiment, Order versus Feeling.

Within this conflict, however, the possibility has been seen of reaching a higher unity, containing and transforming the original antitheses. A method that would preserve the uniqueness of individual things or events and at the same time lift them into the context of their meaning would hold the key to a synthesis above science and touching reality itself. Many modern thinkers believe that this key has been found in analogy. From the point of view of human experience, the likeness of things apparently far removed from one another seems more important than the colorless and quality-less laws of which science boasts. If—to take as an example a detail favored in Mann's novels—an identical reddening of the cheek occurs in fever and in shame, does not this *fact* touch upon the presence in the human of an

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endless chain of correspondences, cutting across the organic, the moral, the esthetic, the social, and ultimately also of the political? Disease, sex, the heightening of physical beauty, self-abandonment, hot climates, drugs, certain animals and certain races, arrange themselves in a unity which science, with its unhappy preference for strictly demarcated research, can only overlook or misrepresent. Hence, in the mind's passage, necessarily erratic, towards completeness, science as an absolute method of investigation must be left behind; while the door of the philosophical myth opens upon measureless possibilities.

Especially inappropriate would seem a scientific approach to history—for here is the high ground where humanity and nature merge into a single whole, a plane continuously flooded and laid bare by the perpetual exchange between the illusory and the intelligible. Analogy alone, with its insights and flexibility, appears fitted to preside over this unstable firmament.

But this analogical approach, if it is to replace science, cannot content itself with the occasional intuitions of the poetic mind. It must achieve the discipline of a systematic methodology. "From any technique of analogies," said Spengler, "we are far distant . . . here is a root, in fact the only root, from which can come a broad solution of the problems of history." It is the technique of analogies that results in the new myth—which is supposed to be, to quote Troy's Spenglerian expression, "the concrete and dynamic image of the human microcosm as a whole."

To gain a simplified picture of how this "technique" is developed, we might imagine Spengler or Mann asking themselves the question: Why do Science and Life remain firmly opposed? And answering: Because in the actual world all things tend to define themselves as mechanical or living. If this conclusion is reached—and in Mann's work it is a major concept—the problem of Reality and Science descends from the field of abstract thought, and its polar concepts become the formula for arranging facts and for judging them. All organic, "life-sided" Irrationals line up on one side and pit themselves on principle against abstract and lifeless Forms. Thus we arrive not merely at correspondences, which have always been noted, but at a logic of correspondences.* And, to be sure, logicians of correspondences—who can decide on moral grounds which political movement

* For example, the essay by Kenneth Burke on Thomas Mann, from which the following is quoted was written many years before Mann's attack on "the slogan-minded." "Castorp descends, not to a specific European war, but to regimentation, to the relief, even the suicidal relief of the slogan-minded . . . After years of vacillation he seeks the evasion of a monastery, though in these secular days, when the power of theology has dwindled, the dogmatic certainties for which people are burned will more often be those of patriotism, and the equivalent of churchly penance becomes the advance in numbers under arms." Burke's later work consists of a complication and rarification of such displacements of values.

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represents a "force imperative to life" and which must inevitably be defeated.

The philosophic artist of the analogical method aims at something more than either emotional expression or formal construction, mere data or mere Idea. In theory, his rhetoric combines the transient beauty of organic life with the static perfection of reason and the formal tradition; in this way, it gives rise to a new beauty and a new truth inexplicable in the old terms. Music, rhythm, repetition become a major element, a metaphysical element, since rhetorical *beat* must serve as the binder of the antitheses, as the equivalent of the mysterious pace of change and recurrence in the real world.

In the real world? Is it proper now to speak of a real world, which the work of art is intended to reflect or represent? Is not the work of art itself an element of this real world, in fact, a very superior element? What is the literary intervention into this process of exchange between the formal and the unique but the final human act of understanding, the synthetic image that knits together the physical and the unreal, and thereby becomes itself the only total reality.

A world of likenesses, of symbols, of—in the term of the old German mystic, Jacob Boehme—"signatures"; apparently, a world of dreams and poetry, yet reality, too, the sole Reality, though without quite the steadiness one had grown accustomed to expect there. To repeat, metaphor is no longer a device of poetic ambiguity or instinctive clarification: it has become method, groundwork, and definition. A system has been created for the mechanical drawing of analogies. The symbolism of "pure poetry" has long been outdistanced; the new technique expands and contracts to embrace the vastest abstractions and the most trivial-seeming commonplaces; it applies equally to Time, newspaper advertisements, love, horse-breeding, or international politics.*

And in this universe of "simultaneous" meanings the Artist himself is the only truly human creature, and his work the only truly historical act. Spengler saw the composition of his *Decline of the West* as the last great *event* of western culture—the *only possible* cultural *act*. As for the role of the Artist, Mann describes it in his political *Measure and Value*: "Always I have seen in art the pattern of the human; in the life of the artist, human life raised to its highest power; humanity as it were in itself and in its very essence."

In the culture dominated by these values and conceits the Artist becomes the hero of all comprehensive novels and plays (as in Mann, Gide, Proust, Joyce, Pirandello), and history-writing openly becomes

* See *The Folklore of Capitalism*, by Thurman Arnold, a rather stilted application of analogy to the American political and economic structure.

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the means of controlling events (as exemplified by the deliberate falsification of the past which is such a sinister power in modern political life).

Such, in most general outline, is the origin, part literary and part metaphysical, of the specific "world of Art" from which Mann draws his higher measure and value. As a perspective, it shares the shakiness and intermittence of all forms of poetic and metaphorical insight, which at times lights up relations and at other times obscures them. In so far as it set itself up, however, as a metaphysic of absolutes to replace science, it can function only as a source of mystification, by insisting on a portion of unreason in every idea.

Science and the Destiny of the Individual

Despite the frequent complaint of "traditionalists" that modern experience is lacking in poetic unity, a complex tradition of accepted likenesses and symbolic identifications colors the emotional and intellectual life of our epoch. Certain similarities have been noted so often that the medium in which the careful analogist works actually contains a high percentage of plausibility. The existence of platitudes implies, of course, a common situation and a common response.

Among the most powerfully recurring insights of the past hundred years is that which finds modern society to be in essential respects a vast lifeless mechanism, a fetishistic and inhuman engine of "men behaving like things." Caught in a vault of iron relations, which contract about him or relax according to laws of their own, the modern individual has been recognized as lost and alienated, a stranger to the world and to himself. He is separated from the old order of heaven—which was at least an expression of his own deepest feelings—yet he is held at bay, too, from the natural and the human where he might feel at home. In his inner life, modern man discovers The Double, The Split Personality—for on the one hand, his most intimate definition springs from the night mystery of private existence, while on the other, the needs of life force him to masquerade under the alias of the efficient Abstract Citizen. The objective and psychological antithesis between the individual and society is a fundamental fact of modern culture.

This tension sinks deeply into our consciousness and our sensibility; and where the image it casts is a static one, it shows science to be the mental counterpart of oppressive, life-sapping order, of mechanical, "outside" organization. In science the individual is brought face to face with a death devised by the human intellect. Here, the relation between science and reality is no longer a theoretical

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problem but a set of terms representing a spiritual conflict—it becomes possible to hate scientists!

This reflex to science is a major platitude of our times. And the analogical technique in elaborating its symbol-language discovers in medicine and physiology a rich warehouse of death masks and infernal stageprops. Cocteau, for example, creates in his *Orpheus* a meticulous vaudeville with arrangements of surgical implements, messengers from the grave, sex, the Artist, and other items of the new-myth paraphernalia.

Marxism anticipates the overcoming of individual alienation through the reorganization of society. The spiritual predicament of modern man is conceived by materialist historical thought as belonging to a definite stage of man's struggle with nature; from this view science is an indispensable instrument of the human, the weapon of its knowledge and consciousness of the world. Mann, however, whose politics make so vital an issue of freedom, presents the spiritual dilemma of present day man as an eternal situation. He translates the conflict between individual and society into a cyclical drama of moral absolutes, a form of allegory or Mystery Play. The old angels of Heaven and Hell emerge once more upon the stage, where nothing has changed but the costumes and manners of the actors. In the half-farce of the medieval theatre, Satan, Hell's Mouth, and the Tortures of the Damned provided a spectacular décor for the Last Judgment and the Triumph of Virtue: on Mann's modern stage the ornamental function is performed by Science and its arcana—doctors, diagnoses, effects of the weather and intoxication, the physiology of shame and exaltation.

Having fixed the identity of society, discipline, science, and death, Mann's method creates a perspective of polar absolutes in which all the data of modern man's existence reproduce themselves in the tableau of an eternal destiny. The life of the individual now works itself out as a series of self-destructive phases: making its debut in the social community of the family (duty-bound, legal, and ritualistic in its essence), the ego is drawn by "love, disease, and music" towards an extreme of isolation and self-recognition, where it is confirmed, heightened, exaggerated, and, finally, through an irony of reversal, dissolved into its opposite; by means of this dissolution it passes, metaphorically, through the rainbow of Dionysian mysteries and transcendental states—it comes to know death, eternity and prophecy; with a dual awfulness and beauty the individual receives his keenest sense of himself as a unique, free being, a once-occurring, completely differentiated and cosmically centred entity, at the very moment when,

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through love, disease, divine grace, or symbolically identical agencies, his ego has begun to recede and he is becoming a new curious "shell made of his own substance", lifeless, solemn, formal, and "noble." Into this corpse, however, the process continuing, there seep once more the seeds of growth and organic integration, bringing again April, anguish, and shame. And then, he returns again to the community, grows mechanical, rational, social, and, in a different sense than that of his organic "initiation", finds himself, here too, to be transcendental and super-personal.

Respectable people reject Cocteau as an irresponsible impresario of cultural *trompe d'oeil,* and his art as a mixture of opium levitation and surrealist hoaxing. Yet in the same quarters a heavy solemnity greets Mann's even-keeled philosophic Zeppelin buoyed by a more careful blending of the same gases. Science, death, vision, ecstasy, combine in a typical passage of *The Magic Mountain* (Castorp has just stripped off his shirt before the X-ray machine):

"Put your arms about it," he [the doctor] said. "Embrace the board, pretend it's something else—if you like. Press your breast against it as though it filled you with rapture. Like that. Draw a deep breath."

(And a little later, when the doctor permits Castorp to observe the inner structure of his own hand):

"With the eyes of his Tienappel ancestress [who had visions of the skeletons of those about to die] penetrating, prophetic eyes, he gazed at this familiar part of his own body, and for the first time in his life he understood that he would die. At the thought there came over his face the expression it usually wore when he listened to music: a little dull, sleepy, and pious, his mouth half open, his head inclined towards one shoulder."

Though Mann's dramas are decided on the subjective plane, the limits of the psychology of character and motivation are set by the mechanics of his dogmatic-moral scheme. His favorite theme, the slipping over of restraint into abandonment, follows a deductive pattern which excludes the possibility of individual variation. Mann's characters are moved by a determinism far more rigid than that of the real world. One or two examples will demonstrate how his novels contradict his optimistic asseverations that man is free to decide his destiny by choosing his values. Castorp, whose physical condition depends on Mann's moral juxtapositions, has been listening to the Russian couple making love in an adjoining room:

"Here Hans Castorp remarked with surprise that the flush which had mounted in his freshly shaven cheek did not subside, nor its accompanying warmth; his face glowed with the same dry heat as

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on the evening before. He had got free of it in sleep, but the blush had made it set again."

The mere thought of love is enough to call forth the sign of mortality, in Castorp or anyone else. The only individual difference is in the degree of resistance to this "vice."

Again—Woman, Love, Lassitude, "The Orient," enter, in the person of Frau Chauchat, the room where Castorp is breakfasting:

"Hans Castorp gave a sudden angry start. A door was slammed —*it was the one on the left, leading into the hall,* and someone had let it fall shut, or even banged it, a thing he detested; he had never been able to endure it. Whether from his upbringing, *or out of natural idiosyncrasy,* he loathed the slamming of doors, and could have struck the guilty person. *In this case, the door was filled in above with small glass panes, which augmented the shock with their ringing and rattling.* 'Oh come,' he thought angrily, 'what kind of damned carelessness is that'?"

I have italicised the details added for the purpose of "naturalising" the incident and, by increasing the solidity of the scene, preventing Castorp's experience from disclosing itself as a stage in an abstract process. But the action itself and Castorp's response to it are wholly schematic, like—shall we say—the confessions in certain notorious trials. Castorp's fury has no dependence upon or relation to a particular individuality; it is obviously—even satirically—disproportionate to the occurrence (this mildly moody young gentlemen "could have struck the guilty person"?). The conflict between convention and self-abandonment is reflected in the angry opposition to the careless newcomer; but this general hostility has entered the larger context of the "Principle" of Love and Death. The sound of the banging door pierces Castorp like the arrow of Eros, though he has not even seen the shocking Russian at whose feet he is destined to fall.

The masked episode, introduced with exaggerated though inauspicious effect, is passed over; after a few hours, however, have permitted Castorp's disease to ripen, the detail is picked up again and played for the full significance of its love-symbolism:

"At that moment the glass door on the left slammed shut, with rattle and ringing of glass; he did not start as he had on the first occasion, but only made a grimace of lazy disgust; when he wished to turn his head, he found the effort too much for him—it was really not worth while."

Already in an advanced state of abandonment, and still no sight of the charmer. Metaphysical propaganda lifts the action into a fabulous world of moral necessity, to which an appearance of reality is supplied by the repetition of physical details—"the rattle and ringing of glass." No scientific law could more perfectly exclude the possibility of spiritual liberty.

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Duty and the Great Leader

The limitless freedom of the individual to create values and to live by them is an illusion much cherished in America; and there is little doubt that Mann's audiences find in his speeches some such message of spiritual liberation. The fact is, however, that Mann's notion of the situation of the average man and of what is good for him is something quite different from the American dream of boundless self-expression. Not only are his characters powerless to alter the fantasy-world in which they are submerged, but each value towards which they tentatively stretch their hands is promptly cancelled by its opposite. Death, they learn, as they rock from side to side in their intoxicating educational pilgrimages, is infamous and shameful, yet it is also a noble, sacred, and eternal spirit; the body is indecent, organic life itself, but at the same time it is also the glorious image of nature; honor may gain strength from the thought that "representing is more and higher than simply Being," yet "representing" tends to exceed the "law-given limits of reason" and lose itself in the ritualistic "timeless" desert of death; feeling steeps itself in the magical changes, until it is betrayed to the lust of death and decay—only to find that "though honor might possess certain advantages, yet shame had others not inferior."

Such is the ironic defeat of all human values, and science can add little to man's power over his fate. One course only, one measure and value, lies open before the *gemeine Mann,* the mediocrity who conforms by not conforming: the ideal of duty, of the Middle Way, a path continuously picked between the extremes, whatever they may happen to be. "My idea was," said Mann, "to show my hero, who lingers now on the left side now on the right side, the middle road of life."

To this rule, however, there are exceptions. Mann's political pronouncements repeatedly warn that undiluted democracy cannot be the goal of humanity. Unwilling to yield to the Nazis the metaphysical beauty of hierarchical order, he points scornfully to Hitler as more plebeian than Roosevelt. Democracy, he believes, must complete itself in aristocracy—this is a major measure and value. And here again, his abstractions glide so skilfully from one register to another that his auditors seem to hear the music of their own higher desires, without troubling themselves to question whether it is really in aristocracy that they have lodged their hopes.

Above the muddled head of the small man with his cautiously balanced duty rises the figure of the superior synthesis, the personification of the Work of Art which controls destiny in the time-stricken world of the half-real. The salvation of man is pictured in a moral transcendence which will bring to an end his internal struggle and de-

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stroy also the contradiction between his individual life and an alien society. But this new integration is not contained within the original life of the individual; it is something on a higher plane. There is implied in it an absolute supremacy with respect both to ability and rights; and it is personified by people quite removed from "the herd." All men are not created free and equal, is the credo of this philosophy. As Ramon Fernandez said, describing the value-producing "sentiment" which raised the individual to the order of the Elite: "Nothing material guarantees it, but it is able to guarantee itself by that I know not what which is eternal and which appears in its slightest testimonies: and one may say that the true sentiment, whatever it may be, imprints the seal of justice upon the most terrible actions."

After the ironical catharsis of the common man's feelings and duties, after the more or less fierce balloting for or against personal and impersonal, consciousness and dream, asceticism and self-indulgence, there emerges a higher justice and terrible actions—there emerges something eternal, a *je ne sais quoi,* the Superman.

If Mynheer Peeperkorn escapes being trapped, like Castorp, Aschenbach, Settembrini, Naphta, Consul Tienappel, His Royal Highness, and the rest, in the humiliating dual-dilemma of life and death it is because he is a creature of this different order.

"But the result is what we see, the dynamic effect—he puts us in his pocket. We've only one word for that—personality. We use it in another, more regular sense too, in which we are all personalities—morally, legally, and otherwise. But that is not the sense in which I am using it now. I am speaking of the mystery of personality, something above either cleverness or stupidity, and something we all have to take into account: partly to try to understand it; but partly, where that is not possible, to be edified by it. You are all for values; but isn't personality a value too? It seems so to me, more so than either cleverness or stupidity, it seems positive and absolute, like life—in short, something quite worth while, and calculated to make us trouble about it."

There are, then, two orders of humanity, one of which is entirely intelligible to the analytics of the rational-emotional antithesis, while the other is a mysterious absolute, something rare and powerful in life.

Peeperkorn might seem to belong to the "life-side" of the earlier dualism. He is perhaps more Dionysian that Apollonian, more obviously a representative of will and intuition than of reason or restraint. But he is on a higher level of passion and wilfulness than Castorp or Aschenbach in their limp love-states. In him energy has become an affirmative good; it is no longer disease and dying. In contrast with the democratic mediocrities, whose individualism Mann

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found to consist in and to work towards an extreme, Peeperkorn's egotism is justified by its very exaggeration. "The whole thing is simply a question of scale. If a thing has size, one cannot call it vice." Here Measure overshadows Value.

Peeperkorn is a good-natured fellow, a grotesque daemon of jolly parties and festive evenings. His originality has nothing in common with the esthetic-intellectual or sentimental-romantic quality that cuts one off from society; on the contrary, he is gallant, garrulous, and familiar. He exerts a fascination upon the inmates of the Berghof which is inspiriting, blithe, and "civilizing." He broadens their apprehensions and quickens their joy and reverence of life—truly, a good mixer and the life of the party, in a manner which would have been impossible to a Tonio Krüger. Under his influence, says Mann, "they gave themselves over to a blissful *far niente* enlivened by scraps of conversation in which, out of sheer high spirits, no one hung back." A benign deity, he is the modern analogical agent of the positive, life-furthering element of all religions: "Holy, holy, my friends. In every sense, Christian and pagan."

The power of Peeperkorn proceeds from within his own personality. No explanation, psychological or social, is offered for his avoidance of the vitiating and degrading dualisms. In Fernandez' terms, his integrity is "guaranteed by an I know not what." Peeperkorn overrides the fatal clash of feeling and reason without being compelled to trade himself on the social exchange because he is himself a sort of perfection of the common man, an archetype of the middle road, a never-severed member of the group, to whom individuality has been added as an extra attribute. Comfortable and mighty in the primitive-domestic tradition, he embodies as natural qualities all the good things of the simple community existence, distributing their benefits with the heightened enthusiasm of one who has seen them blessed by beloved household gods—money, strength, joviality, freedom from prejudice and boredom, a sense of the concrete, tact, information, the love of festival and celebration, and, above all, that mysterious source of the magical fascination that unifies his other gifts, Personality. " 'Good Lord, what a personality!' he [Castorp] felt for the hundredth time." Incoherent, "blurred," he soars with decisive gesticulations above the "dialecticians" Settembrini and Naphta, to his ecstasy of suicide, an "abdication," a perfectly-timed act of the human will.

It would appear that at the time *The Magic Mountain* was written Mann's intention was to put Peeperkorn forward as a solution, contrasting the traditional-historical, half-real, half-legendary man-of-the-world with the dwarfs created by contemporary Western attitudes.

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Unfortunately, this anticipation of the hero of the Joseph story—who, as Troy explains, becomes the "nourisher" of his race—was no sooner projected as an imaginative "potential" when European history placed upon the stage a material version of the same myth-values. And here the reality proved to be the exact opposite of the mental negative. The divinity of the all-uniting Personality, resting upon popular fascination and authority, revealed itself *in time* not as the dreamed-of God of Creation but as a God of Evil—the old theology thus taking its revenge for the humanistic detour.

It is curious that Troy's comprehensive study—which by the way completely misinterprets the rôle of Peeperkorn—should pass over almost without mention Mann's last great contemporary allegory, *Mario and the Magician,* published in 1931. For this story, in which for the first time Mann applied his method to a specific political subject, occurs within the period of transition to his present "pure myth" phase, and represents a questioning of the function of the Superman. Political events had shown Mann a view of the group-hearted ecstatic which had convinced him that the "uniter," whatever place he might occupy in legend, was scarcely a sure solution for the modern world. Here no doubt was the first step towards the freer world of the *Joseph* pre-history.

From a "strictly literary point of view", the Mario story is simply a less profound companion-piece to *Death in Venice.* An American reader might well overlook the fact that the familiar atmosphere of uneasiness in its relation to duty abandoned, with which the tale opens, is worked up this time with details giving a political cast to the idea of the anti-moral extreme. The sexual suggestiveness of the place-name Torre di Venere and some chords from earlier pieces, heard in the accounts of the unreliable character of the weather, the leaden, breathless heat, "frightful and relentless," the carelessness and lowered discipline of holiday-time, announce the theme, which is drawn measure by measure through episodes of Italian discrimination against the visiting foreigners, Italian over-patriotism, Italian nervous and self-conscious assertiveness, and a particular, repulsive Italian youngster "whose sunburn had made disgusting raw sores on his shoulders" and who "outdid anything I have ever seen for ill-breeding, refractoriness, and temper, and was a great coward to boot."

The powerful Irrational, the fascinating, procreative, unintellectual dynamism, which during that one long sick holiday, *The Magic Mountain,* joined with the idea of social regeneration to cast up Peeperkorn as the cheerful high god of the place, here reappears as the instigator of a degrading though stimulating political attitude; the extreme of organic-national integration producing an exasperat-

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ing sulkiness, a dangerous isolation from world society. Out of this ingrowing group, and as the "personification of things as they had been in Torre in general: queer, uncomfortable, troubling, tense, oppressive, and yet fascinating in its diabolical and evil power," steps the epitome of its drama, the figure itself of its power and weakness, the Italian magician Cipolla, slave and master of the common unconscious, "a man of an age hard to determine, but by no means young; with a sharp, ravaged face, piercing eyes, compressed lips, small black waxed mustache . . ."

Cipolla, like Peeperkorn, is a Personality. He, too, is arrogant and attractive, irresistible and incomprehensible. In the magician, however, the mystery is the opposite of that of naiveté, rich intuitions, and creativeness; it consists of a sophisticated diabolism, no less effective. Peeperkorn is incoherent; Cipolla *parla benissimo*. Peeperkorn is hearty, big; Cipolla is a peevish, spiteful hunchback. Yet in their influence upon the crowd they are identical. Under the sway of Peeperkorn "they utterly succumbed to feelings which for self-abnegation and intensity far exceeded the accustomed gamut of these people." And the magician, in his role of hypnotist, never ceasing his onslaught on the individual will of each member of his audience, brings about " a drunken abdication of the critical spirit," a "blind carrying out of a series of acts, directed by a force that proceeds from organism to organism by unexplored paths."

The "self-abnegation" of the audience of both Personalities is presented in like language. In Cipolla's victim "it was consoling to see that he was having a better time than he had had in the hour of his pride"; and when a varied animation has possessed the entire assemblage, we learn that "it looked unmistakably like enjoyment." Just as the subdued guests of Peeperkorn's "blissful *far niente*" could take "no offense (at their own indiscretions) all being in the same irresponsible condition."

The leader is intoxicated and acts as an intoxicant to the group, whose creative or destructive flame is uplifted by all that fuddles and unifies. Peeperkorn was thirsty: "Obviously the system of this kingly man stood in more than common need of moistening"; and the liquor glass of Cipolla "was constant in all his experiments . . . it was always invoked to add fuel to his daemonic fires."

It is with this effervescence varying to frenzy that the inspired Leader enslaves to his own whimsical purposes each split man of the demos, each mere person. His seductiveness may result in restoring to the citizen his own life deepened by a new sense of its glory, or it may annihilate it in a blaze of vanity and vindictiveness. Peeperkorn is

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good because he regenerates the bourgeois invalids; Cipolla is evil because he threatens to demolish them.

In his treatment of Cipolla and Peeperkorn, Mann's irony is drowned in a definite aspiration and dread. And here his method of analysis, having risen to the peak of its vision, ceases to function. Mann's choice of the "middle road" and his personal allegiance to social-democratic politics, his dreams of good will embodied in Peeperkorn and Joseph and his hatred and fear of Cipolla, are not necessary conclusions of the organic-analogical scheme. It is perhaps more to his credit that his individual decency alone separates him from his fatherland; as for his philosophy, any decision could have been made consistent with it. For no fact in nature, history or human society can remain firm against the analogizing capacity of Art.

Thus the Values of Art become in practice the Value of Will, of pure pragmatism—whether the "infamous pragmatism" which Mann so much deplores in the present rulers of Germany, or the creative pragmatism of the decent man, which he urges democratic governments to adopt. Will and its personifications become the sole standards of man's needs and capacities. Such are the fluid and essentially irresponsible principles which Mann opposes to science and to Marxism.*

So much for Measure and Value. We come now to the final element of Mann's political thesis: his theory of conservative revolution.

Mann's Theory of Change: The Non-radical Revolution

Marxism points to historical processes as determining the modifications that occur in art, rhetoric, the imagery of folk-lore, and other social forms of the individual imagination. In making an analysis of a poem or a novel, Marx and Engels examined the changing social and cultural combinations of the countries that produced them. In contrast, it is characteristic of the analogist that he looks to art and to the dreams

* From *Mario,* the transition to the 'pure myth' of *Joseph* is a logical development, in the moral sense. By applying his method to eroded images of the past, Mann declares his unwillingness to continue tampering with contemporary mores; instead he attempts to strengthen them with his political speeches. Mann's passage from the subject of modern man in his "universal" aspects to that of man "in his state and standing in the universe" is thus a movement towards the right. For in spite of the most conservative intentions, his analysis, so long as it continued to touch upon the situation which gave rise to it, could not escape the *radicalism* of the middle *class—historic destroyer* of all Values.

The Great Leader now takes his place in The Eternal, while in the practical world Mann commits himself to the cautious and contradictory behavior of the "democratic" mediocrity and to the mild "aristocracy" of good behavior without intoxicating overtones. But the purification of his art through release from realistic factors has by no means the effect, as some critics maintain, of raising the Joseph work to a higher level of philosophic completeness—it simply turns the method inside out. If in *His Royal Highness, The Magic Mountain, Buddenbrooks,* and *Mario,* Mann sought to make history into a myth, in the *Joseph* cycle he wishes to present a myth as history. As a result his art now discards the hard substance of contemporary life which his irony-machine had been pounding to a pulp; and the loss is felt in the relaxed and bulbous quality of his prose.

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and myths of mankind in order to formulate a Principle of Change that will apply in all countries and at all times. Here is revealed perhaps most clearly the essentially religious and idealistic nature of most analogical thinking.

In general, the idea of the new eternally emerging from the "expanded elements" of the old, which Mann takes from Goethe, is not contrary to scientific findings; in fact, Goethe himself stands as unofficial poet laureate of modern science for his insistence upon this conception. But in taking hold of evolutionary thought, Mann at once abstracts it from reality and converts it into a set of eternal relations without content. Judging German history, he does not seek to define concretely the expanding elements which result there in new phenomena; if he did so, he could not assert with assurance that change is always "conservative," in the political sense. For at certain moments in its development the expansion might produce a radical upheaval; and in order to bring out the new in a manner which accords with human desires, radical actions might be necessary. Playing on words, Mann transforms a general law of nature into a moral commandment which both Nazis and revolutionaries have wickedly violated. And having rejected historical understanding, he attempts to deduce Germany's condition and her future from his philosophy of man's inner nature and his position in the universe.

The problem of change has always been with Mann a metaphysical rather than a scientific question; and it is typical of his thought that he conceives change as endless circular motion without limit or direction. In the chapter "Changes" in *The Magic Mountain,* he presents the metaphysical substructure of conservative revolution:

"We say a thing is 'brought about' by time. What sort of thing? Change! Now is not then, here not there, for between them lies motion. But the motion by which one measures time is circular, is in a closed circle; and might almost equally well be described as rest, as cessation of movement—for the there repeats itself constantly in the here, the past in the present. Furthermore, as our utmost effort cannot conceive a final limit either to time or in space, we have settled to think of them as eternal and infinite—apparently in the hope that if this is not very successful, at least it will be more so than the other. But is not this affirmation of the eternal and the infinite the logical mathematical destruction of every and any limit in time or space, and the reduction of them, more or less, to zero?"

If all limits can undergo a "logico-mathematical destruction," speculative philosophy can take the place of materialist analysis.

Change in Mann's novels is noticeably deficient in dramatic quality and the tension of struggle; it is gradual, working through accumulation and repetition—the key to his rhetoric—never reach-

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ing a final alternative. Death is omnipresent, not as a threat to continuity but as one of its major styles. Castorp's growth, while it involves loss of equilibrium, cannot be checked by anything in the outer world. His education is founded upon pedagogy, reading, and self-recognition, a sort of spiritual bookkeeping—"taking stock" Mann appropriately calls it—rather than upon the defeat or attainment of some human purposes. His is the record of a preordained career, of a gamble in which nothing is risked, since everything fits it. One is reminded, by way of contrast, of Dostoyevsky's "blank wall"—formidable obstacle to man's desire. "What stone wall?" the Man from the Underground asks. "Why, of course, the laws of nature . . ." Castorp freely contemplating this wall simply absorbs it into his symbolist instruction. The only conclusive act attempted in *The Magic Mountain,* the suicide of Naphta, breaks out of the structure of the novel and lacks convincing motivation: so, too, with the entranced assassination of Cipolla in *Mario.* In Mann's world the act that fixes and defines is always an Irrational.

Is there not a social kernel in this formulation of life as an unbroken continuation of the old through an eternal process, within which the "human" role is to maintain balance and not be carried over too far either on the side of life or on the side of death?

The conservative merchant life which Mann so much admires dominated a period of German history when social changes worked in the main through a gradual accumulation which modified the past by augmenting it. True, the burgher of Mann's youth had lost the springtide vitality he had enjoyed in Goethe's days. That "real personality, the picturesque figure" of the merchant, whom Castorp recognized as his ancestor, proved upon closer examination to have acquired certain scarcely noticeable traits—gestures, momentary lapses—harmless enough in themselves, but, when one thought about it, hinting unmistakably at the presence of death. The vigor of the individual Will fell short somehow of being the sole lord of harmonious, well-timed transformation. "Dark forces" had risen, both within and without, to challenge the steady progress towards a better life.

Yet in this autumn phase the opposition between new and old, while growing more distinct, more *systematic* in character, seemed at the same time to be fused in the increase and ripeness of the latter. Conflict itself seemed a principle of health. Before 1914 there was little external evidence of a final limit, a mortal period.

It is pre-war Germany that is reflected in Mann's theory of change. The economic contradictions of this epoch are, like its moral, theoretical, and esthetic ones, lifted to the level of universal law. The process of growth might be periodically dislocated (as in business

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crises) but its falling into extremes (overproduction, unemployment) would not negate the process itself nor conceivably lead to its being superseded by some other.

It was in pre-war Germany that the theory of the "adaptation of capitalism" and the gradual, peaceful realization of socialism through moral and spiritual means gained wide credence. Since that time, peaceful progress has been notably violated on several occasions. And it is precisely against the violence of the present epoch of German "progress" that Mann is speaking. Yet this hypothesis of the transformation of the old relations without inner struggle is the basis of Mann's disapproval not only of Nazism but of revolutionary socialism as well. It is this peaceful culture-dominated perspective that shows political mass action as the opponent of revolutionary process, cultural creation by individuals as opposed to class struggle, and socialist ideals as violated by Marxist materialism.

The words which Rosa Luxemburg used in 1899 to characterise Eduard Bernstein, theoretical father of socialist conservatism, apply in full force to the position of Thomas Mann in 1939:

"When he wars against 'raising the material factors to the rank of an all-powerful force of development,' when he protests against the so-called 'contempt for the ideal' that is supposed to rule the Social-Democracy, when he presumes to talk for idealism, for morals, pronouncing himself at the same time against the only source of the moral rebirth of the proletariat, a revolutionary class struggle—he does no more than the following: preach to the working class the quintessence of the morality of the bourgeoisie, that is, reconciliation with the existing social order and the transfer of the hopes of the proletariat to the limbo of ethical simulacra."

At the turn of the century Bernstein prognosticated the disappearance of crises, the growing strength of the middle layers of the population, the amelioration of the economic and political situation of the proletariat. All these material hopes of capitalism's conservative revolution have since been destroyed. Yet humanist socialism urges humanity to retrace this barren ground. But will the ruling class pass over voluntarily to socialism in the name of Culture? Why not to the Brotherhood of Man in the name of Christ? As a basis of appeal for the moral conversion of capitalism into socialism, humanist socialism today is but a pale shadow of the ghost of Christian socialism.

It is not in his assertion of the interplay of individual and mass and of cultural and political forces, that Mann opposes himself to historical analysis, but in repeating his old assumption that art itself possesses a specific, independent tempo of development which can be imposed on social change. It was from the point of view of a revolution above history that, a few years ago, he condemned expressionist

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art and literature—since banned by Hitler as degenerate—as springing from the same "dark forces" as the Nazis themselves. The social changes that forced the art of Europe in the direction of expressionism were ignored in the name of the higher tempo of Art. Of course, in acting thus Mann did not save himself from being "a child of time."

Mann's idealism, inventing its own political and social limits as it invents its psychological ones, rests its antiradical antifascism on the assumption that a conservative solution is possible for the radical problems of modern society. Momentarily, he reasons, Germany has lost its human measure, because of its dubious "political gift," its traditional "pessimism on the score of politics"; but through this very loss it undergoes the experiences of suffering which, leading once more to the search for measure, make its recovery of equilibrium inevitable.

The causes of the political tipping of the cultural scale remain a psychological mystery, an Irrational, an incapacity buried in the heart of the Folk. A wave of madness and evil accounts for Germany's present tragedy. Wicked and disproportionate Ideas suddenly took root in its humanity, destroyed its balanced forward movement, and worked havoc with its accomplishments. And therefore it is not analysis and the understanding of the people everywhere that will destroy fascism, but righteousness—a righteousness backed by the armies and navies of England, France, and the United States.

Thus does Mann in his politics as in his art systematically turn everything inside out. In a speech at Carnegie Hall, he anticipates the rise of socialism through the development of "the bourgeois revolution not only politically but also economically."— (is it necessary to be Marxist to understand that the bourgeois revolution perfected itself economically with the consolidation of the reign of *private* property?) He calls for a "spiritual renewal" of democracy, and urges present democratic governments to an increased military belligerency that can result only in the destruction of both democracy and spirit. To discourage support of the Nazis among the business men in his audience, he himself lends support to one of their most powerful lies in stating: "In certain respects, particularly economically, National-Socialism is nothing but bolshevism." Throughout, he argues as if history were a seminar, in which the best—i.e. least active—theory of change were being sought in order that it might be applied to the alteration of bourgeois institutions.

The boundaries of the earth's surface haunt Thomas Mann, as they once fascinated the merchant society whose culture he so proudly represents. In his frequent essays in spiritualism he has tried to peep over the edges. As for the future of mankind, it is an eternal terrain

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that appears and disappears among the clouds of the spirit. It is the old *Civitas Dei,* though semi-secular, and in the modern style. It is to be built by Religion and Socialism — Religion without the church, Socialism without Marx—working through the humanist good sense of "many people in many lands."

Here on earth, meanwhile, geographical and productive limits stifle the creative life of capitalist nations. Cumulative development, "conservative revolution," is cut down to the vanishing point and reverses itself into a regressive plunge towards the abyss. The *limit,* far from undergoing a "logical-mathematical destruction," closes in on the man of peace and moral ideals. The social contradictions, which a few decades ago seemed to flow in and out like pistons of progress, clash in a wild disorganization of the machinery of society. The mind of man is thrown into violent extremes: the mechanical, utopian, scholastic radicalism of the Communist Party of Germany swings over to the death-radicalism of the National Socialists. . . And in the midst of these terrifying oscillations, this political Witches' Sabbath, Thomas Mann clamors, not for the breaking of the old inner bonds and the release of the creative forces of German life, but for the restoration of peace and equilibrium, for a moratorium on "radical terminology." And as the resolution draws nearer and events break through one layer after another of his illusions of peace, the "penny pipe" of cultural progress which Mann borrowed from his own Settembrini rises to a shrill cry among the war drums. Here, indeed, the celebrated ironist of Spirit and Nature is caught in the fearful irony of the history of man.

Academic

The stethoscope tells what everyone fears:
You're likely to go on living for years,
With a nurse-maid waddle and a shop-girl simper,
And the style of your prose growing limper and limper.

THEODORE ROETHKE

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Florida

The state with the prettiest name,
The state that floats in brackish water,
Held together by mangrove roots
That bear while living oysters in clusters,
And when dead strew white swamps with skeletons,
Dotted, as if bombarded, with green hummocks
Like ancient cannon-balls sprouting grass.
The state full of long S-shaped birds, blue and white,
And unseen, hysterical birds who rush up the scale
Every time in a tantrum.
Tanagers embarrassed by their flashiness,
And Pelicans, whose delight it is to clown;
Who coast for fun on the strong tidal currents
In and out among the mangrove islands
And stand on the sand-bars drying their damp gold wings
On sun-lit evenings.
Enormous turtles, helpless and mild,
Die and leave their barnacled shells on the beaches,
And their large white skulls with round eye-sockets
Twice the size of a man's.
The palm trees clatter in the stiff breeze
Like the bills of the Pelicans. The tropical rain comes down
To freshen the tide-looped strings of fading shells:
Job's Tear, the Chinese Alphabet, the scarce Junonia,
Parti-colored pectins and Ladies' Ears,
Arranged as on a gray rag of rotted calico,
The buried Indian Princess's skirt;
With these the monotonous, endless, sagging coast-line
Is delicately ornamented.

Thirty or more buzzards are drifting down, down, down,
Over something they have spotted in the swamp,
In circles, like stirred up flakes of sediment
Sinking through water.
Smoke from woods-fires filters fine blue solvents,
On stumps and dead trees the charring is like black velvet.

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The mosquitoes
Go hunting to the tune of their ferocious obbligatos.
After dark, the fire-flies map the heavens in the marsh
Until the moon rises.
Cold-white, not bright, the moonlight is coarse-meshed,
And the careless, corrupt state is all black specks
Too far apart, and ugly whites; the poorest
Post-card of itself.
After dark, the pools seem to have slipped away.
The alligator, who has five distinct calls:
Friendliness, love, mating, war, and a warning,
Whimpers and speaks in the throat
Of the Indian Princess.

ELIZABETH BISHOP

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Pages From a Journal

Andre Gide

Early in life I put myself on guard against beliefs I owed to habits encouraged by my parents, to my protestant upbringing, and even to my own country. By no means did I preconceive them as bad. I rather chose not to admit them again before I had proved their excellence myself, passed them in review, compared them to others, submitted them to my critical appraisal and had assured myself that they gave out a pure and full tone.

I did not realize until much later, and even only recently, that a number of these conceptions—I mean those which I accepted after testing—were the product, often indirect, of my social condition, of the privileges of fate (which had allowed me to be born into an easy, comfortable situation, sheltered from material cares), of the society in which I had lived, including my parents, and saying it more simply, of my *class*. This word, not so long ago, did not mean anything much to me. Men I knew, were more or less fortunate, and, my sympathy carrying me towards the most unfortunate, I had scarcely had any but poor friends—that is to say those who were obliged, and often most painfully, to earn a living. No matter! The problems of the social order interested me hardly at all, and my mind allowed itself to be carried away or occupied only by problems which seemed to me to be common to all men. And no doubt I had first of all to realize how bad a form of society was which guarantees the happiness of a few privileged people by the misery of the great majority, a society which profits by this misery and maintains it. Then I realized that a number of those ideas which I had accepted and which I had considered acceptable, which my thoughts dwelt on, had only been formed by virtue of this inequality and were themselves part of a system which seemed to me indefensible. I did not condemn these ideas out of hand, for to some of them I owed my art and whatever in my eyes justified my existence; but at least they seemed suspect to me and I began to look askance at them and particularly those which flattered my class, those in which the bourgeois class could find support, comfort, and justification.

My most critical attention was reserved for those concepts from

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which I might myself benefit. I devoted to them a sort of surly preference; yes: a recurrent preference. But even this critical survey, I must admit, remained bourgeois, and I know well enough that had I been less privileged I could not have undertaken it. That is also the reason, I thought, why working class people accept so easily the ideas of others; why so often (some say: always) revolutionary incentives are a product of the bourgeois class although they are addressed to the masses and can only succeed through them. (1933)

* * *

There is, no doubt, in the theories of Rousseau, less of the paradoxical and foolish than people say. But what is irritating is that they were theories which were sometimes dictated to him by feeling. I cannot believe that man, as he claims, is "naturally good". The taste, the need, even the very sense of truth is to be found neither in the child nor in primitive peoples. This utopian view of the past dangerously falsifies every project, every prediction of the future. But how can one deny—and precisely because it shapes man and educates him—that civilization is responsible for many defeats, society for much that is atrophied. Man is all to be made, to become, and this *good man* (not at all "naturally good", but a product, a work of cultivation and of art)—one's great complaint against society is for having done so little, worked so badly, to achieve him.

What I particularly dislike, in Rousseau, is the value he places on ignorance. The misuse which man has made of the discoveries of science tends to incriminate not science, but man himself who misuses them.

It goes without saying: if fire burns us, we will not put it out for that.

What I hold against Rousseau is that he speaks of "laws of nature" when it is a question of human matters. Natural laws are immutable; there is nothing that man creates, there is nothing human which cannot be changed—beginning (or rather: ending) with man himself.

* * *

In Lenin's *The State and Revolution,* a short unfinished book but all the same most significant and weighty, there is a sentence that brings me up short. "Up to now", he says, reverting to an idea dear to Marx and Engels, "there is not a single revolution which, everything considered, has not resulted in a strengthening of the administrative machinery of the state." I am quoting from memory and I would not swear that these are his exact words; but I think that I have not distorted his thought. Besides, his whole book develops this theme. And from this idea he draws inspiration to under-

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mine more completely the complicated machine of the State. For if previous revolutions have until now only ended in a strengthening of the very thing which they set out to destroy, he thinks it is because these revolutions were never fully realized; because they did not press on to their logical conclusions. This was written in 1917. If it was not finished, it is because Lenin believed that to act is more important than to write. This 'realized' revolution—he himself created it. To accomplish it and to perfect it, no sacrifice was too great. The revolution finally triumphs—has triumphed. There have been twenty years of that. And what is the U.S.S.R. today? The dreaded bureaucracy, the administrative machinery has never been stronger. There is no "up to now" about it: the little sentence is still true and what Lenin wrote in 1917 he could write again today.*

* * *

I worry very little as to whether my writings conform to Marxism or not. This "fear of the Index", which I used to talk about, the absurd fear of being found at fault by the *purists,* worried me a great deal for a long time, and to such a degree that I didn't dare write. What I am going to say will seem very infantile. I do not care. I have no wish to boast, and I think that it is my own weaknesses that I am most willing to expose. But now I am free from this paralyzing fear. And this fear has taught me a good deal—yes, much more than Marxism itself. The discipline which I imposed upon myself during three years was not without benefit; but I find more profit today in freeing myself from it than in continuing to submit. This plunge into Marxism made me understand the indispensable qualities which it lacked.

Was the failure of the U.S.S.R. necessary to bring me to think thus? The U.S.S.R. merely gives form to my disenchantment. At first, one tries to tell oneself: it was infidelity that caused this failure. Then one hears the echo of those sinister words: "There is not a single revolution which . . ."

* * *

"I am not a Marxist", they say that Marx himself exclaimed towards the end of his life. I like this sally. To my way of thinking it means: "I bring a new method and not a recipe, nor a finished system which thereupon exempts man from any further effort (I mean: from any effort of thought). Therefore, do not be limited by my words but go beyond them."

It has been too often said that Molière made fun of medicine.

* These few reflections have been copied from my preface to Yvon's book: *l'U.R.S.S. Telle qu'Elle Est* (Gallimard). Editors' Note: Published in this country without Gide's preface as *What Has Become of the Russian Revolution?* (International Review, Box 44, Station O, N.Y.C., 25 cents.)

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Not at all: he made fun of doctors and what they had made out of medicine. Nor was he irritated by Aristotle, but by Aristotelianism. Nor by science, but by those men of learning of his day who, proceeding by syllogisms, lazily allowed a knowledge of formulas to take the place of a direct observation of nature.

How many young Marxists today, sunk in the "dialectic", swear by Marx as one used to swear by Aristotle! Their "culture" begins and ends with Marxism, which, they believe, permits them to understand everything, to judge everything. And everything which lies outside the scope of Marxism or is contradictory to it, they declare either trivial or bad.

It is significant that certain pure Marxist theoreticians expect, hope for, and demand of society, and of the state, that which they do not even begin by achieving for themselves. For the Christian, the revolution occurs in himself. I wish I could say: *begins* in himself; but most often that revolution suffices him; while for the Marxist the revolution outside himself is enough. I should like to make these two efforts, these two effects complementary, and I think that often their opposition is rather factitious.

A constant need for reconciliation troubles me; it is a defect of my intelligence; it is perhaps a quality of my heart. I would like to marry Heaven and Hell, à la Blake, to resolve contradictions, and to see, generally speaking, only misunderstanding in the most destructive and murderous oppositions. "Individualism and communism . . . how can you pretend to reconcile these two antagonists even within yourself?" my friend R. M. de G. laughingly said to me. "They are water and fire." But from their marriage steam is born.

There is a tragic need to *hate,* which I feel everywhere nowadays; a need to set in opposition everything which should be understood and completed and fertilized and united. The most intransigeant opposition. Only destruction is born of this fostering of hate.

* * *

One must beware of the illusion (for I believe it is an illusion) that the last years of life can be devoted to a more energetic search for God. With the progressive blunting of the senses, a sort of stupor numbs one's being; and, as the outside world loses its lustre and its incentives, one's vigor fails; a certain dreary indifference takes possession of the spirit, already pruned like those trees which the woodcutter has prepared for felling.

* * *

To feel that one is an 'abnormal' person—I wept distractedly when I first made this discovery, but it was necessary to make the

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best of it, and I had already accepted the abnormal enough not to be much suprprised when I had to recognize it in sexual questions. No; my astonishment came rather, when I discovered that, in this field at least, the abnormal (I mean by this: what had been handed out to me as such) was, on the whole, rather frequent.

I experienced this feeling of being set apart when I was still young, when I realized that often I did not react like the others—like the common run of others. And after that, it is vain to humiliate oneself, wish to be one of the crowd, run oneself down, seek to submerge oneself in the mass and make oneself pleasing—one is still nonetheless a being apart. The child can experience this feeling when he is still very young, sometimes with sadness, sometimes even with anguish, and very rarely with joy.

* * *

I see less well and my eyes tire more easily. Also my hearing is worse. I tell myself that it is undoubtedly a good thing that thus, little by little, there draws away from us a world which, if one would not find it too hard to leave, one would find it too hard to leave suddenly. The best thing would be, at the same time, to approach progressively . . . something else.

Nothing is more futile than this thirst for learning which still torments me. If I could only break with this habit of thinking that my time is wasted when I am not occupied! This continual escape into the thought of others, from fear also of finding myself alone with my own thoughts, is a form of laziness. I have come to congratulate myself on the weakness of my eyes which will soon refuse me too constant reading.

* * *

It is ten o'clock in the evening. The day is scarcely over. I hear the last sounds of the farm. And now everything goes to sleep in a great silence. The bird which sang so melodiously a few moments ago, is quiet. I tell myself every day, at all hours, that I have certainly not much longer to live. The thought of death never leaves me; it lives within me without depressing me.

* * *

Every evening, after "Good night", having retired to my big room, I remain a long time seated in an armchair, doing nothing. Usually, I read rather late into the night, but my eyes are tired and the light is poor. Then I let my thoughts drift at random; and I call that 'meditating'. I have no more projects in my head, not one; and this inactivity of mind troubles me. I have always loved work and have found pleasure in effort. Perhaps (but it cannot be here, where nothing stimulates me to want anything) I will enjoy again

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some new impulse towards some end, some work to be done . . . but I tell myself sometimes, often, that for the time being I have said what I have to say and that my cycle is closed. This is also why I shall depart without too much regret.

To be at odds with his times—there lies the *raison d'être* of the artist. And that is why I hardly admit that his only significant value is as a mirror. He moderates, opposes, leads. And that is also why he is often not understood at first except by the few.

* * *

(Sorrento)

Nobility, grace, voluptuousness. For here no trace of softness accompanies the joy of living. Among the luxurious vines, everywhere one sees the effort of man and the triumph of the spirit. In no other land, certainly, is there a happier marriage of vegetation and a bold architecture, where often only the festooning vine tempers with a smile an excessive severity. *Nobility;* that word haunts me, in Italy—where the most sensual caress approaches spirituality.

Everything pleases me—even the volcanic tufa at Sorrento, and these profound ravines, these crevasses, which must have a special name of their own in geology, one which I should like to know. They are due, it seems to me, not so much to erosion (although a little water still flows at the bottom of the gulf) but to some abrupt seismic break. The walls remain sheer like the quarries of Syracuse, with the same luxurious flowering at their base. But it seems even more plausible, that the earth opens, like a bursting grenade, from the effect of the heat.

I will never be able to say how much I owe to Italy or how deeply I was, and remain, in love with her.

The buildings, the walls along the roads, are covered with inscriptions in gigantic letters; salutes to Il Duce and quotations from his speeches—perfect slogans, admirably chosen and well fitted to arouse the youth, to *enlist* it. Above all, these three words: *Believe. Obey. Fight.* appear most frequently, as if conscious of summing up the very spirit of fascist doctrine. These words shed a certain light and show me, in the process, the proper "stand" for anti-fascism. And nothing brings more confusion than the adoption of this slogan by communism itself, which still pretends to be anti-fascist, but is no longer so, except out of political expediency, communism which asks recruits to the party to *believe,* to *obey* and to *fight,* without questioning, without criticism, with blind submission. Three-fourths of the Italian inscriptions would be just as suitable on the walls of Moscow. They tell me that one can triumph over an adversary only on his own terrain, and only with his own arms, that sword

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must be opposed to sword (of which I am by no means convinced). It is necessary first of all and above all to oppose the spirit to the spirit, something which is seldom done any more. The historians of tomorrow will inquire how and why, the end having been swallowed up in the means, the communist spirit has ceased to oppose the fascist spirit and even to differentiate itself from it.

* * *

I continue to read Abel Hermant with the liveliest interest. His article in this morning's *Figaro* lends itself to discussion.

"If Flaubert had lived until our time," he says, "he would laugh a good deal at our 'slogans', for he had a very special hatred for those ready-made phrases which we, today, call slogans in the American style." The slogan is not exactly a "ready-made phrase"; it was originally a "battle cry" capable of rallying the members of a party. The word today designates any formulation which is concise, easy to remember because of its shortness and apt to strike the imagination. Such are those phrases of Mussolini which cover the walls of Italy. Perhaps Flaubert might have admired these formulations; what made him indignant, was to see them accepted without criticism. But the formula-slogan does not necessarily hide a commonplace. The words of St. Francis de Sales, noted by Massis, form a slogan: "There is no ready-made saintness", as does Malraux's phrase: "Culture is not inherited, it is won". And Flaubert would have approved of them, for it is the "ready-made" to which he objects, all that is obtained without a struggle, or more precisely still: laziness and anything that favors it.

Flaubert's *slogan*: "I term bourgeois whoever thinks meanly," seems to imply a great deal more than Abel Hermant recognizes. If I were to interpret it, I would say, in the name of Flaubert: I care very little about "social classes"! There can be "bourgeois" people among the nobles just as well as among the workers and the poor. I recognize the bourgeois, not at all by his clothing or his social level, but by the level of his thoughts, and, to simplify, I should call anyone "bourgeois" who thinks meanly. And if Flaubert, in another *slogan* which Abel Hermant also quotes, adds: "The bourgeois hates literature", I see in this phrase (much less of a "slogan" than the first), not what Abel Hermant sees in it: "Flaubert called bourgeois anyone who did not like what he was doing", but rather: the *bourgeois*, that is to say: whoever thinks meanly, hates the

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gratuitous, the disinterested, anything that he cannot use. He can only accept utilitarian art and literature and hates all that he cannot raise himself high enough to understand.

* * *

Stendhal's great secret, his real cleverness, is, that he writes *immediately*. His impetuous thought remains as living and as freshly colored as the butterfly which has just spread its wings, and which the collector has seized as it left the chrysalis. Add to that, a certain quality of alertness and spontaneity, of the unconventional, of the sudden and the naked, which always ravishes us anew in his style. One might say that his thought does not even stop to put on its shoes before running. This should be a good example; or rather: I should follow his good example more often. One is lost when one hesitates. Translating, for that reason, does one's style no good. Since one is dealing with an alien way of thinking, it is a matter of warming-over, of dressing up, and one goes looking for the best words, the best turns of expression; one is sure that no matter what is to be said, there are twenty ways of saying it, and that there is one preferable to all others. One adopts the bad habit of dissociating the form from the substance, emotion and the expression of emotion from thought, which should remain inseparable.

For example, I would like to say now that: "If others wrote less, I should find greater pleasure in writing." . . . Very well! It's done! What better phrase could I find? It came to me first, it explains my thought perfectly. But my mind turns around it, examines it, criticizes it and seeks to bring to bear against it that petty process of attrition and destruction which it were better to leave to time, which looks after such things. And in saying all this, I myself fall into the errors for which I reproach others.

What more do I want to say? That this superabundance of writings, of printed matter, stifles me, and that in Paris, where it is all piled up, overflowing from inadequate bookcases, on tables, chairs and even the floor and everywhere, my thoughts can no longer move or breathe. I am like Pompeii under its deluge of ashes; and I do not wish, in writing myself, to add to the pile. And sometimes when I do open one of these new books, it always seems to me that the little which is true and new in it, would gain by being said more briefly—or might not be said at all. So that, when the desire to write overtakes me, I hesitate and ask myself: is that really worth saying? Haven't others said it before me? Haven't I said it already myself? And I am silent.

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Eclogue of the Liberal and the Liberal Poet

L.: *In that place, shepherd, all the men are dead.*

P.: Yes, look at the water grim and black
Where immense Europa rears her head,
Her face pinched and her breasts slack.

L.: *I said, shepherd, all the men are dead.*

P.: Shall I turn to the road that goes America ?
Is that a place for men to be dead
Or living ? If you don't mind being asked.

L.: *Try it and see, it's a pretty good way*
To skim three thousand miles in a day
And none of them America.

P.: But what about her face and the tasked
Wonders of her air and soil, her big belly
That Putnam writes about under the sun?

L.: *I don't know Put, I don't know his Nelly—*
I'd name her that if she'd name it fun
But you know she hasn't any name,
Nowhere you touch her she's the same.

P.: What, shepherd, are we talking about?

L.: *You started it, shepherd.*

P.: Shepherd, I didn't.

L.: *You did; you saw the poetical face of Europe.*

P.: You said it was no place for men to be.

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L.: *I meant seawater; you thought I meant hope.*

P.: Hell, I reckon you think I am a dope.

L.: *I didn't say that; I said there was no place.*

P.: If not in a place, where are the People weeping?

L.: *They creep weeping in the face, not place.*

P.: Is it something with which we may cope—
The weeping, the creeping, the pee-pee-ing, the peeping?

L.: *Hanging is something which I will do with this rope.*

P.: Alas, for us who peep, weeping.
Alas, for us you see but little hope.

L.: *Alas, I didn't say that; you rhymed hope with rope.*
I meant I was going to hang us both for creeping.

P.: Afterwards they could process us into soap;
Afterwards they would rhyme soap with hope.

Both: What a cheerful rhyme! Clean not mean!
Been not seen! Not tired—expired!
We must now decide about place.
We decide that place is the big weeping face
And the other abstract lace of the Race.

L.: *Shepherd, what are we talking about?*

P.: Oh, why, shepherd, are we stalking about?

ALLEN TATE

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Hemingway and His Critics

Lionel Trilling

BETWEEN *The Fifth Column,* the play which makes the occasion for this large volume*, and *The First Forty-Nine Stories,* which make its bulk and its virtue, there is a difference of essence. For the play is the work of Hemingway the "man" and the stories are by Hemingway the "artist". This is a distinction which seldom enough means anything in criticism, but now and then an author gives us, as Hemingway gives us, writing of two such different kinds that there is a certain amount of validity and at any rate a convenience in making it. Once made, the distinction can better be elaborated than defined or defended. Hemingway the "artist" is conscious, Hemingway the "man" is self-conscious; the "artist" has a kind of innocence, the "man" a kind of naivety; the "artist" is disinterested, the "man" has a dull personal axe to grind; the "artist" has a perfect medium and tells the truth even if it be only *his* truth, but the "man" fumbles at communication and falsifies. As Edmund Wilson said in his "Letter to the Russians about Hemingway," which is the best estimate of our author that I know, ". . . something frightful seems to happen to Hemingway as soon as he begins to write in the first person. In his fiction, the conflicting elements of his personality, the emotional situations which obsess him, are externalized and objectified; and the result is an art which is severe, intense and deeply serious. But as soon as he talks in his own person, he seems to lose all his capacity for self-criticism and is likely to become fatuous or maudlin."

Mr. Wilson had in mind such specifically autobiographical and polemical works as *Green Hills of Africa* (and obviously he was not referring to the technical use of the first person in fictional narrative) but since the writing of the "Letter" in 1935, we may observe of Hemingway that the "man" has encroached upon the "artist" in his fiction. In *To Have and Have Not* and now in *The Fifth Column* the "first person" dominates and is the source of the failure of both works.

Of course it might be perfectly just to set down these failures simply to a lapse of Hemingway's talent. But there is, I think, some-

* *The Fifth Column and The First Forty-Nine Stories.* By Ernest Hemingway. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1938. $2.75.

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thing else to be said. For as one compares the high virtues of Hemingway's stories with the weakness of his latest novel and his first play, although one is perfectly aware of all that must be charged against the author himself, what forces itself into consideration is the cultural atmosphere which has helped to bring about the recent falling off. Insofar as we can ever blame a critical tradition for a writer's failures, we must, I believe, blame American criticism for the illegitimate emergence of Hemingway the "man" and the resultant inferiority of his two recent major works.

It is certainly true that criticism of one kind or another has played an unusually important part in Hemingway's career. Perhaps no American talent has so publicly developed as Hemingway's: more than any writer of our time he has been under glass, watched, checked up on, predicted, suspected, warned. One part of his audience took from him new styles of writing, of love-making, of very being; this was the simpler part, but its infatuate imitation was of course a kind of criticism. But another section of his audience responded negatively, pointing out that the texture of Hemingway's work was made up of cruelty, religion, anti-intellectualism, even of basic fascism, and looked upon him as the active proponent of evil. Neither part of such an audience could fail to make its impression upon a writer. The knowledge that he had set a fashion and become a legend may have been gratifying but surely also burdensome and depressing, and it must have offered no small temptation. Yet perhaps more difficult for Hemingway to support with equanimity, and, from our point of view, much more important, was the constant accusation that he had attacked good human values. For upon Hemingway were turned all the fine social feelings of the now passing decade, all the noble sentiments, all the desperate optimism, all the extreme rationalism, all the contempt of irony and indirection—all the attitudes which, in the full tide of the liberal-radical movement, became dominant in our thought about literature. There was demanded of him earnestness and pity, social consciousness, as it was called, something "positive" and "constructive" and literal. For is not life a simple thing and is not the writer a villain or a counterrevolutionary who does not see it so?

As if under the pressure of this critical tradition, which persisted in mistaking the "artist" for the "man", Hemingway seems to have undertaken to vindicate the "man" by showing that he, too, could muster the required "social" feelings in the required social way. At any rate, he now brought the "man" with all his contradictions and conflicts into his fiction. But "his ideas about life,"—I quote Edmund Wilson again—"or rather his sense of what happens and the way it happens, is in his stories sunk deep below the surface and is not con-

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veyed by argument or preaching but by directly transmitted emotion: it is turned into something as hard as crystal and as disturbing as a great lyric. When he expounds this sense of life, however, in his own character of Ernest Hemingway, the Old Master of Key West, he has a way of sounding silly." If, however, the failures of Hemingway "in his own character" were apparent to the practitioners of this critical tradition, they did not want Hemingway's virtues—the something "hard" and "disturbing." Indeed, they were in a critical tradition that did not want artists at all; it wanted "men," recruits, and its apologists were delighted to enlist Hemingway in his own character, with all his confusions and naivety, simply because Hemingway had now declared himself on the right side.

And so when *To Have And Have Not* appeared, one critic of the Left, grappling with the patent fact that the "artist" had failed, yet determined to defend the "man" who was his new ally, had no recourse save to explain that in this case failure was triumph because artistic fumbling was the mark of Hemingway's attempt to come to grips with the problems of modern life which were as yet too great for his art to encompass. Similarly, another critic of the Left, faced with the aesthetic inferiority of Hemingway's first play, takes refuge in praising the personal vindication which the "man" has made by "taking sides against fascism." In other words, the "man" has been a sad case and long in need of regeneration; the looseness of thought and emotion, the easy and uninteresting idealism of the social feelings to which Hemingway now gives such sudden and literal expression are seen as the grateful signs of a personal reformation.

But the disinterested reader does not have to look very deep to see that Hemingway's social feelings, whatever they may yet become, are now the occasion for indulgence in the "man". His two recent failures are failures not only in form but in feeling; one looks at *To Have And Have Not* and *The Fifth Column,* one looks at their brag, and their disconcerting forcing of the emotions, at their downright priggishness, and then one looks at the criticism which, as I conceive it, made these failures possible by demanding them and which now accepts them so gladly, and one is tempted to reverse the whole liberal-radical assumption about literature. One almost wishes to say to an author like Hemingway, "You have no duty, no responsibility. Literature, in a political sense, is not in the least important. Wherever the sword is drawn it is mightier than the pen. Whatever you can do as a man, you can win no wars as an artist."

Very obviously this would not be the whole truth, yet saying it might counteract the crude and literal theory of art to which, in varying measure, we have all been training ourselves for a decade.

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We have conceived the artist to be a man perpetually on the spot, who must always report to us his precise moral and political latitude and longitude. Not that for a moment we would consider shaping our own political ideas by his; but we who of course turn for political guidance to newspapers, theorists, or historians, create the fiction that thousands—not, to be sure, ourselves—are waiting on the influence of the creative artist, and we stand by to see if he is leading us as he properly should. We consider then that we have exalted the importance of art, and perhaps we have. But in doing so we have quite forgotten how complex and subtle art is and, if it is to be "used", how very difficult it is to use it.

One feels that Hemingway would never have thrown himself into his new and inferior work if the necessity had not been put upon him to justify himself before this magisterial conception of literature. Devoted to literalness, the critical tradition of the Left took Hemingway's symbols for his intention, saw in his stories only cruelty or violence or a calculated indifference, and turned upon him a barrage of high-mindedness—that liberal-radical highmindedness that is increasingly taking the place of thought among the "progressive professional and middle class forces" and that now, under the name of "good will" shuts out half the world. Had it seen what was actually in Hemingway's work, it would not have forced him out of his idiom of the artist and into the idiom of the man which he speaks with difficulty and without truth.

For what should have been always obvious is that Hemingway is a writer who, when he writes as an "artist", is passionately and aggressively concerned with truth and even with social truth. And with this in mind, one might begin the consideration of his virtues with a glance at Woodrow Wilson. Hemingway has said that all genuine American writing comes from the prose of Huckleberry Finn's voyage down the Mississippi and certainly his own starts there. But Huck's prose is a sort of moral symbol. It is the antithesis to the Widow Douglas—to the pious, the respectable, the morally plausible. It is the prose of the free man seeing the world as it really is. And Woodrow Wilson was, we might say, Hemingway's Widow Douglas. To the sensitive men who went to war it was not, perhaps, death and destruction that made the disorganizing shock. It was perhaps rather that death and destruction went on at the instance and to the accompaniment of the fine grave words, of which Woodrow Wilson's speeches were the finest and gravest. Here was the issue of liberal theory; here in the bloated or piecemeal corpse was the outcome of the words of humanitarianism and ideals; this was the work of presumably careful men of good will, learned men, polite men. The

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world was a newspaper world, a state-paper world, a memorial speech world. Words were trundled smoothly o'er the tongue—Coleridge had said it long ago—

> *Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which*
> *We join no feeling and attach no form*
> *As if the soldier died without a wound . . .*
> *Passed off to Heaven, translated and not killed.*

Everyone in that time had feelings, as they called them; just as everyone has "feelings" now. And it seems to me that what Hemingway wanted first to do was to get rid of the "feelings," the comfortable liberal humanitarian feelings: and to replace them with the truth.

Not cynicism, I think, not despair, as so often is said, but this admirable desire shaped his famous style and his notorious set of admirations and contempts. The trick of understatement or tangential statement sprang from this desire. Men had made so many utterances in such fine language that it had become time to shut up. Hemingway's people, as everyone knows, are afraid of words and ashamed of them and the line from his stories which has become famous is the one that begins "Won't you please," goes on through its innumerable "pleases" and ends, "stop talking." Not only slain men but slain words made up the mortality of the war.

Another manifestation of the same desire in Hemingway was his devotion to the ideal of technique as an end in itself. A great deal can go down in the tumble but one of the things that stands best is a cleanly done job. As John Peale Bishop says in his admirable essay on Hemingway (which yet, I feel, contributes to the general misapprehension by asserting the evanescence of Hemingway's "compassion"), professional pride is one of the last things to go. Hemingway became a devotee of his own skill and he exploited the ideal of skill in his characters. His admired men always do a good job; and the proper handling of a rod, a gun, an espada or a pen is a thing, so Hemingway seems always to be saying, which can be understood when speech cannot.

This does not mean that Hemingway attacks mind itself, a charge which has often been brought against him. It is perhaps safe to say that whenever he seems to be making such an attack, it is not so much *reason* as it is *rationalization* that he resists; "mind" appears simply as the complex of false feelings. And against "mind" in this sense he sets up what he believes to be the primal emotions, among others pain and death, met not with the mind but with techniques and courage. "Mind" he sees as a kind of castrating knife, cutting off peo-

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ple's courage and proper self-love, making them "reasonable," which is to say dull and false. There is no need to point out how erroneous his view would have been were it really mind that was in question, but in the long romantic tradition of the attitude it never really *is* mind that is in question but rather a dull overlay of mechanical negative proper feeling, or a falseness of feeling which people believe to be reasonableness and reasonable virtue. And when we think how quickly "mind" capitulates in a crisis, how quickly, for example, it accommodated itself to the war and served it and glorified it, revulsion from it and a turning to the life of action—reduced, to be sure, to athleticism: but skilful physical effort is perhaps something intellectuals too quickly dismiss as a form of activity—can be the better understood. We can understand too the insistence on courage, even on courage deliberately observed in its purity: that is, when it is at the service of the most sordid desires, as in "Fifty Grand."

This, then, was Hemingway's vision of the world. Was it a complete vision? Of course it was not. Was it a useful vision? That depended. If it was true, it was useful—if we knew how to use it. But the use of literature is not easy. In our hearts most of us are Platonists in the matter of art and we feel that we become directly infected by what we read; or at any rate we want to be Platonists, and we carry on a certain conviction from our Tom Swift days that literature provides chiefly a means of identification and emulation. The Platonist view is not wholly to be dismissed; we *do* in a degree become directly infected by art; but the position is too simple. And we are further Platonistic in our feeling that literature must be religious: we want our attitudes formulated by the tribal bard. This, of course, gives to literature a very important function. But it forgets that literature has never "solved," though it may perhaps provide part of the data for eventual solutions.

With this attitude we asked, Can Hemingway's people speak only with difficulty? and we answered, Then it surely means that he thinks people should not speak. Does he find in courage the first of virtues? Then it surely means that we should be nothing but courageous. Is he concerned with the idea of death and of violence? Then it must mean that to him these are good things.

In short, we looked for an emotional leader. We did not conceive Hemingway to be saying, Come, let us look at the world together. We supposed him to be saying, Come, it is your moral duty to be as my characters are. We took the easiest and simplest way of using the artist and decided that he was not the "man" for us. That he was a man and a Prophet we were certain; and equally certain that he was not the "man" we would want to be or the Prophet

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who could lead us. That, as artist, he was not concerned with being a "man" did not occur to us. We had, in other words, quite overlooked the whole process of art, overlooked style and tone, symbol and implication, overlooked the obliqueness and complication with which the artist may criticize life, and assumed that what Hemingway saw or what he put into his stories he wanted to have exist in the actual world.

In short, the criticism of Hemingway came down to a kind of moral-political lecture, based on the assumption that art is—or should be—the exact equivalent of life. The writer would have to be strong indeed who could remain unmoved by the moral pressure that was exerted upon Hemingway. He put away the significant reticences of the artist, opened his heart like "a man," and the flat literalness, the fine, fruity social idealism of the latest novel and the play are the result.

The Fifth Column is difficult to speak of. Summary is always likely to be a critical treachery, but after consulting the summaries of those who admire the work and regard it as a notable event, it seems fair to say that it is the story of a tender-tough American hero with the horrors, who does counter-espionage in Madrid, though everybody thinks he is just a playboy, who fears that he will no longer do his work well if he continues his liaison with an American girl chiefly remarkable for her legs and her obtuseness; and so sacrifices love and bourgeois pleasure for the sake of duty. Hemingway as a playwright gives up his tools of suggestion and tone and tells a literal story—an adventure story of the Spanish war, at best the story of the regeneration of an American Pimpernel of not very good intelligence.

It is this work which has been received with the greatest satisfaction by a large and important cultural group as the fulfilment and vindication of Hemingway's career, as a fine document of the Spanish struggle, and as a political event of significance, "a sign of the times," as one reviewer called it. To me it seems none of these things. It does not vindicate Hemingway's career because that career in its essential parts needs no vindication; and it does not fulfill Hemingway's career because that career has been in the service of exact if limited emotional truth and this play is in the service of fine feelings. Nor can I believe that the Spanish war is represented in any good sense by a play whose symbols are so sentimentally personal* and

* In fairness to Hemingway the disclaimer of an important intention which he makes in his Preface should be cited. Some people, he says, have objected that his play does not present "the nobility and dignity of the cause of the Spanish people. It does not attempt to. It will take many plays and novels to do that, and the best ones will be written after the war is over." And he goes on: "This is only a play about counter espionage in Madrid. It has the defects of having been written in war time, and if it has a moral it is that people who work for certain organizations have very little time for home life." I do not think that this exempts the play from severe judgment by those who dislike it, just as I think that those who admire it have a right to see in it as they do, a "sign of the times."

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whose dramatic tension is so weak; and it seems to me that there is something even vulgar in making Spain serve as a kind of mental hospital for disorganized foreigners who, out of a kind of self-contempt, turn to the "ideal of the Spanish people." Nor, finally, can I think that Hemingway's statement of an anti-fascist position is of great political importance or of more than neutral virtue. It is hard to believe that the declaration of anti-fascism is nowadays any more a mark of sufficient grace in a writer than a declaration against disease would be in a physician or a declaration against accidents would be in a locomotive engineer. The admirable intention in itself is not enough and criticism begins and does not end when the intention is declared.

But I believe that judgments so simple as these will be accepted with more and more difficulty. The "progressive professional and middle class forces" are framing a new culture, based on the old liberal-radical culture but designed now to hide the new anomaly by which they live their intellectual and emotional lives. For they must believe, it seems, that imperialist arms advance proletarian revolution, that oppression by the right people brings liberty. Like Hemingway's latest hero, they show one front to the world and another to themselves, know that within they are true proletarian men while they wrap themselves in Early American togas; they are enthralled by their own good will; they are people of fine feelings and they dare not think lest the therapeutic charm vanish. This is not a political essay and I am not here concerned with the political consequences of these things, bad though they be and worse though they will be, but only with the cultural consequences. For to prevent the anomaly from appearing in its genuine difficulty, emotion—of a very limited kind—has been apotheosized and thought has been made almost a kind of treachery; the reviewer of *The Fifth Column* to whom I have already referred cites as a virtue Hemingway's "unintellectual" partisanship of the Spanish cause. The piety of "good will" has become enough and Fascism is conceived not as a force which complicates the world but as a force which simplifies the world—and so it does for any number of people of good will (of a good will not to be doubted, I should say) for whom the existence of an absolute theological evil makes non-existent any other evil.

It is this group that has made Hemingway its cultural hero and for reasons that need not be canvassed very far. Now that Hemingway has become what this group would call "affirmative" he has become insufficient; but insufficiency is the very thing this group desires. When Hemingway was in "negation" his themes of courage,

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loyalty, tenderness and silence, tangentially used, suggested much; but now that they are used literally and directly they say far less than the situation demands. His stories showed a great effort of comprehension and they demand a considerable effort from their readers, that effort in which lies whatever teaching power there is in art; but now he is not making an effort to understand but to accept, which may indeed be the effort of the honest political man but not of the honest artist.

An attempt has been made to settle the problem of the artist's relation to politics by loudly making the requirement that he give up his base individuality and rescue humanity and his own soul by becoming the mouthpiece of a party, a movement or a philosophy. That requirement has demonstrably failed as a solution of the problem; the problem, however, still remains. It may be, of course, that politics itself will settle the problem for us; it may be that in our tragic time art worthy the name cannot be produced and that we must live with the banalities of *The Fifth Column* or even with less. However, if the problem will be allowed to exist at all, it will not be solved in theory and on paper but in practice. And we have, after all, the practice of the past to guide us at least with a few tentative notions. We can learn to stop pressing the writer with the demand for contemporaneity when we remember the simple fact that writers have always written directly to and about the troubles of their own time and for and about their contemporaries, some in ways to us more obvious than others but all responding inevitably to what was happening around them. We can learn too that the relation of an artist to his culture, whether that culture be national or the culture of a relatively small recusant group, is a complex and even a contradictory relation: the artist must accept his culture and be accepted by it, but also—so it seems—he must be its critic, correcting and even rejecting it according to his personal insight; his strength seems to come from the tension of this ambivalent situation and we must learn to welcome the ambivalence. Finally, and simplest of all, we learn not to expect a political, certainly not an immediately political, effect from a work of art; and in removing from art a burden of messianic responsibility which it never has discharged and cannot discharge we may leave it free to do whatever it actually can do.

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The Autobiography of Rose

Gertrude Stein

How does she know her name is Rose. She knows her name is Rose because they call her Rose. If they did not call her Rose would her name be Rose. Oh yes she knows her name is Rose.

That is the autobiography of Rose.

The Autobiography of Rose.

Rose knew about afraid and when it happened she knew about afraid. This is what happened.

Grass that is cut is hay.
There there is sunshine
Here there is snow
There there is a little boy
Here there is a little girl
There his name is Allan
Here her name is Rose
Is it interesting.

Rose has an autobiography even if her name was not Rose.

Let us make believe that her name is not Rose. And if her name is not Rose what would be her autobiography. It would not be the autobiography of Rose because her name would not be Rose. But it is the autobiography of Rose even if her name is not Rose oh yes indeed it is the autobiography of Rose.

The Autobiography of Rose.

What happened.

Hay is grass when it is cut.

Hay has nothing to do with water.

Marshes have to do with water but not hay.

But when hay is on a hill-side and there is water. Hay can damn the water. And Rose, Rose with her father and her mother can be caught by all that water but Rose and her mother and her father were caught by all that water. That is the water went away.

The Autobiography of Rose.

Nobody did not remember that her name was Rose. And if her name was Rose did that have anything to do with playing checkers and being beaten by her grandmother, oh no that had nothing to do with her name being Rose.

Rose does know the difference between summer and winter and this has something to do with her name being Rose. It has something to do with her name being Rose.

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The Autobiography of Rose.

Rose could look at herself and when she saw herself and she knew her name was Rose she could look at herself and not see that her name is Rose. Oh yes she could. She could see that perhaps her name was not Rose.

If Rose was her name was Rose her nature.

She did not know the difference between Rose and Rose at least she said she did not know the difference between Rose and Rose.

Nobody said.

Nobody does not make any difference in her name not being Rose.

Rose is her name that is what she said.

The Autobiography of Rose.

It is taller to be taller.

Is it older to be older.

Is it younger to be younger.

Is it older to be older.

Is it taller to be taller.

The Autobiography of Rose.

A glass pen oh yes a glass pen.

Would Rose prefer a little dog named Pépé or a glass pen. A glass pen does not write very well and a little dog named Pépé does not allow himself to be caressed very well, so after all there is no choice there is no choice between a little dog named Pépé and a glass pen there is no choice for Rose because neither one she has not been offered either oh no she has not been offered either one.

The autobiography of Rose who has not been offered either one. If she has not been offered either one what is her autobiography. Her autobiography is not that she has not been offered either one. Indeed not. Even if she has not.

And now everybody prepare.

Rose is to be offered one.

Which one.

Which one is Rose to be offered the glass pen or a little dog named Pépé. Which one. This one. And which is this one. Ah which is this one. That is the autobiography of Rose, which is this one.

The Autobiography of Rose.

When Rose was young she is young now but when Rose was young. How young does Rose have to be to be young. She was young she is young, she was very young she is young enough to be very young, and she knows all about being young enough to be young. How young do you have to be to be young. Seven years is old for a dog but not old for Rose. Seven is not old for Rose but is it young.

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The autobiography of Rose is that she was young. And when she was young oh yes when she was young she said she had been young and that is quite certain she had been young. Was she regretting that she had been young so young, was she regretting anything. If she was regretting anything she was not young, how young can you be to be young. Every time Rose was young she was young. Every time and every time was every time. And now. Every time is every time. And Rose is young. Has Rose an autobiography. Rose has an autobiography. Has she an autobiography of when she was young. Rose has an autobiography of when she was young.

A garden and a gardener are two things to Rose.

And then one thing follows another.

A school succeeds a garden.

And a garden succeeds a school.

And later later succeeds a garden.

Later never sounds younger.

Oh no oh dear no

Later never sounds younger.

Older as yet.

There is no older and no as yet.

And so there is no older as yet.

Therefore older does not follow later. And not as yet.

The Autobiography of Rose.

Outside now there is no Rose although in winter yes in winter often in winter quite as often as in winter there is a Rose. And as autumn does not follow winter, autumn comes first and as spring very often does not follow autumn winter comes first and as summer very often comes after what is the matter with Rose knowing it most. She does know it most. That is the autobiography of Rose not that she knows it the most. If she knew the difference between summer and winter and spring and autumn she would know it at first, which she most often does and which she much the most often does. Generally not.

Rose has only one autobiography.

This is the autobiography of Rose.

Any little while she does not neglect being taller not older. Any little while she does not neglect. Being taller. Not older.

The Autobiography of Rose.

Rose. What can she remember. Can she remember Rose. Can she. I am wondering.

Bilignin par Belley, Ain, October, 1936

To Rose. *When they said if she would be good, she said she would know all about it all the same, and all the same she can know all about it. Which is a pleasure to her friend,* Gertrude Stein.

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What Is Logical Empiricism?

William Gruen

Some years ago a few students and friends of the Austrian philosopher, Moritz Schlick, began a series of informal meetings for the purpose of discussing certain current philosophical problems. Out of these discussions arose a more or less organized philosophical theory variously called logical positivism, logical empiricism, scientific empiricism, or simply the philosophy of the "Vienna Circle". Among the earliest public expressions of this philosophy was the series of brilliant books known as the *Schriften zur Wissenschaftlichen Weltauffassung*. Later, the German periodical *Erkenntniss* was established as the organ of the movement, only to be discontinued shortly after the Nazis came to power. By that time wide interest was shown in the movement throughout Europe and America and the logical empiricists organized the first International Congress of scientific Philosophy which met in Paris in 1935. Quite recently these philosophers and scientists began the publication of the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, a coöperative work which promises to be one of the most important events in modern intellectual history.

Recent revivals of rationalistic metaphysics in support of educational and political authoritarianism, and the general growth of anti-empirical ideologies in social science impart to the philosophy of the logical empiricists a militant role in contemporary intellectual life. By calling them the New Encyclopedists much more than a superficial, nominal analogue is expressed. For the work of the new Encyclopedia and the philosophical principles underlying it may yet occupy a historical function similar to that of their eighteenth-century predecessors. The philosophy of the New Encyclopedists, once it is more widely understood, may become like the work of Diderot, D'Alembert and their collaborators—an important tributary to the main-stream of present-day revolutionary thought.

A synthesis of rationalism and empiricism, so brilliantly achieved in the mathematical physics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was the basis of the humanitarian and anti-theological philos-

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ophy of the French Encyclopedists. A similar union of logical formalism and scientific empiricism forms the leading principle of the new Encyclopedia. Like the doctrine of "universal reason" the philosophy of *unified science* has special bearing on social problems. It widens the domain of scientific method to embrace all intellectual and practical enterprise. And in its anti-metaphysical methodology it constitutes a challenge not merely to traditional, speculative philosophy, but to every form of transcendentalism in the social sciences.

Materialistic conceptions of social phenomena are usually no more free of metaphysical doctrines than theories which regard social phenomena as manifestations of transcendent, spiritual values. Doctrines concerning the material and spiritual nature of "reality", or the "ultimate basis" and necessity of social phenomena obscure the practical issues between diverse philosophies of society. Dialectical materialism is no exception, and the persistent linkage of its metaphysical dogmas with Marxist social theory is particularly objectionable in view of the demand—generally made by Marxists—that theory be pertinent to, and continuous with, practice. The latter requirement is irreconcilable with metaphysics. Indeed, it is on the systematic elaboration of this criterion that logical empiricists base their critique of metaphysical doctrines.

This attack on metaphysics is not itself metaphysical. Its weapons were forged in recent analytic studies of logic and the methodology of empirical sciences. Attempts to refute logical empiricism by interpreting it as a new metaphysics have generally confused it with the sensationalistic positivism of the nineteenth century. Curiously enough some of these attempts have been made by writers who profess to be Marxists, but who evidently take their metaphysics more seriously than empirical social analysis. Against such inversion of values in social theory, logical positivism offers an effective critical instrument in the form of an anti-metaphysical, scientific philosophy.

The project of making philosophy scientific is not new. Many philosophers in the past have proposed such reforms. Descartes' *Discourse on Method,* Leibnitz's program for a universal scientific and philosophical language, and Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature* —which he described as "an attempt to introduce the experimental method in moral subjects"—were all motivated by a desire to introduce scientific method into philosophical analysis. These earlier ideals of scientific philosophy differed from the contemporary one in their conception of scientific knowledge. In other words, they differed in what they regarded as adequate evidence for knowledge. Such theories of evidence have been perhaps the most important distinguishing features of philosophical systems, and through their

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development in philosophy have imparted peculiar doctrinal traits to ethical, political and esthetic theories.

Meaning and Truth

One of the outstanding characteristics of scientific discourse is that it is the result of a deliberate attempt to base assertions on evidence. To this extent, common sense, philosophy and even the criticism of the arts can be scientific. Belief or disbelief in a statement will then rest on some procedure whereby the truth of the statement is tested. Where such tests have not been made, the statement cannot be believed or disbelieved; it can be only doubted. But to doubt an assertion is obviously to regard it as believable or disbelievable. The doubt consists in the indecision as to which of these two attitudes to adopt. In other words, to regard the truth of a statement as undecided, one must know that its truth can be tested. If the statement is not testable, it is not undecided; it is merely meaningless. What is neither believable nor disbelievable, is not even dubious.

This principle does not limit the use of language in general. It applies only to statements which are proposed as objects of belief. Most statements of science, philosophy and criticism are of this type. But obviously many expressions are formed, especially in literature, with other ends in view. Logical empiricism does not preclude such expression. It seeks to formulate a principle whereby they can be distinguished from cognitive statements.

Something more than a merely formal theory of language is involved in these considerations. The question is whether meanings shall be determinable by objective, communal procedure, or whether they can be apprehended only through subjective, sympathetic intuitions. Are theories of society and political institutions to be understood in terms of their overtly testable consequences in theory and practice, or shall they be viewed as vehicles of some transcendent, "essential" meanings intelligible only to persons endowed with special insights? Shall the criticism of the arts be testable by observation and analysis, or shall we regard it as an unverifiable revelation, the result of some unique communion between the critic and his subject? The answers to these questions neither prove nor disprove the theory of meaning developed by the logical empiricists. That theory rests not on these issues, but on the logical analysis of science. These questions do, however, indicate some of the practical consequences of a widespread belief in the theory.

This criterion of meaning had been at the basis of pragmatic methodology. The meaning of a statement, according to pragmatism, lies in the practical difference between its affirmation and denial.

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Every significant statement must therefore have empirically determinable consequences. Apart from them, the statement has no meaning. The pragmatic theory of meaning could not, however, adequately account for the meaning of mathematical statements. Analytic studies in mathematics tended to undermine the empiricistic interpretation for which mathematical statements were abstract, but nevertheless empirically descriptive, assertions about matters of fact.

Empiricism has traditionally relied on a psychological analysis of knowledge for support of this view, and so tended to base mathematical propositions, as well as empirical statements, on the theory of perception. It became more and more evident, however, that psychological theories of knowledge were not competent to solve this problem. And the work of Peano and Frege in the foundations of mathematics directed attention to the need for a new analysis of mathematical and empirical science,—an analysis which would study science not psychologically but in its formal or logical aspect.

Considered historically this program for logical analysis of science was a revival of the projects of Raymond Lully and of Leibnitz for a systematization of the language of science whereby it could be employed as a universal calculus. The mechanical operation of such calculus would, if the system were comprehensive enough, be identical with all reasoning. A radical difference, however, separates this rationalistic analysis from the logical empiricist analysis of scientific language For the former the operations of the calculus can in themselves yield knowledge concerning matters of fact; for the latter such operations are purely formal and devoid of reference to the empirical world.

This leads in logical empiricism to a distinction between two kinds of meaning: formal and empirical. Both kinds of meaning are operational, that is to say, meanings—whether formal or empirical—lie in operational consequences. The operations involved in pure mathematics and logic are formal. Those entering into the manipulation and observation of experimental apparatus are empirical. More generally, formal operations are those which pertain only to the symbolic, linguistic functions of things; other operations are empirical. By identifying meanings with operational consequences, logical empiricism, like instrumentalism, denies that there are immanent directly apprehended meanings. No expression in isolation can have meaning. It derives its meaning from its determinable consequences within a system. A statement whose operational consequences are entirely formal has no meaning with reference to the empirical world. Mathematical or logical statements are of this type.

Empirical meanings are derived from empirical operations. To every proposition which makes assertions about anything in the em-

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pirical world, there must correspond some empirical (non-formal) operation capable of testing the truth of the proposition. It is the explicit aim of experimental sciences to observe this principle. It is, however, frequently neglected in philosophy, criticism, and, in some cases, in social science. According to this principle, the statement, "This poem is good" must be accompanied, explicitly or implicitly, by a description of the operations and specific observations whereby the statement may be confirmed. If no such confirming operations are possible, the statement is without reference to any empricial thing; in other words, it says nothing about the poem. For this theory of meaning no statement is inherently empirical. It is *made* empirical by the indication of the empirical procedure for testing it. An expression which is neither empirical nor formal is meaningless.

Metaphors and Metaphysics

The foregoing remarks are made with special reference to the formal and empirical sciences. It appears, however, that there is a large and important class of propositions which make meaningful statement without being scientific. These are the *fictive* assertions which form the major content of poetry and literary fiction. Fictive statements, although in grammatical form they may be identical with cognitive statements, are nevertheless different from them, for they are not subject to belief, disbelief or doubt. They are merely *considered* or noted. While they make assertions about apparently empirical matters, they are nevertheless fictions, and hence the confirmation criterion of meaning is inapplicable to them. It is easy to see, however, that the meaning of fictions is determined by criteria similar to confirmation. Within the complex of relations instituted by the premises of the fiction, fictive statements have determinable consequences. A statement which has no such consequences has no meaning in that fiction.

Most fictions have not merely fictive meaning. Since many of the relational complexes within the fiction are similar to the relations in the empirical world, some of the statements of the fiction by analogy acquire cognitive meaning. The "truth content" of literary fiction rests, therefore, on the logical relation of similarity. The fiction thereby becomes a cognitive meaning metaphorically expressed. When several metaphorical expressions have the same cognitive content, they are logically equivalent. Such metaphorical statements are not peculiar to literature or to everyday speech. They are employed quite frequently in the language of science. Many scientific hypotheses include operationally indeterminate elements. For example, the concept of a perfectly elastic, imponderable ether in Maxwell's theory of the

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propagation of radiant energy, or the concept of an electric fluid in early electrical theory. These ontological contents of the hypotheses must be distinguished from the assertions which the hypotheses make concerning structural or metrical relations which are testable by empirical operations. The same testable metrical relations could, and in fact have been, expressed through other scientific metaphors. It would be useless and ill-advised to attempt the complete elimination of fictive statements from science. But it is necessary to distinguish clearly between the merely fictive and the cognitive content of scientific theories.

A type of fiction of special importance to science and philosophy is one that states a formal meaning in seemingly empirical metaphors. These have been the source of untold discussions and disputes concerning questions which were unanswerable because, in neglect of the metaphorical character of the statements, their fictive meanings were taken for their cognitive content. For example we might consider a doctrine of idealistic metaphysics: "A body is a complex of sensations." The apparently empirical content of this assertion, suggested by such empirical terms as "body" and "sensation" is entirely fictive. Regarded as an empirical statement it is devoid of meaning, for there is no empirical operation whereby its truth may be tested. It can be shown, however, that this metaphysical assertion is so used that whenever it is affirmed, the following statement is also affirmed and conversely: "Every sentence, S, which contains a term designating a body, is the consequence of a class of sentences, C, which contain no terms designating bodies, but which do contain terms designating sensations; and the sentences of the class C are consequences of the sentence S." This statement expresses the cognitive content of the metaphysical doctrine which is thereby revealed as a metaphorical expression of a cognitive meaning. The fictive assertion, as is so often the case with metaphors, is pithy and direct in contrast with its lumbering translation into the purely cognitive form.

It should be noted that the cognitive content of this fictive statement is concerned exclusively with linguistic structures, sentences, and the logical connections between them. The cognitive content is, in other words, formal or syntactical. Metaphorical fictive statements may be classified as formal or material depending on whether their cognitive content is formal or non-formal. In our example the metaphysical metaphor is a formal statement. But since the formal cognitive content is expressed through empirical metaphors, we describe the statement as a formal sentence in the *material mode of language*.

The scientific or philosophical use of formal statements in the material mode is in itself no more objectionable than the use of meta-

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phors in general. To take metaphors literally is, however, sometimes to take them nonsensically, and in philosophy, as elsewhere, is frequently the mark of a certain naivety.

In regarding some metaphysical statements as metaphorical we have assumed that a statement may be fictive despite the fact that it is asserted as cognitive. Are we justified in calling a statement metaphorical when it is proposed, like metaphysical doctrines, as literal truth? The historical and psychological role of metaphors in religion, philosophy and science supports an affirmative answer to this question. If the doctrines which provoke the endless disputes of metaphysicians have no literal meaning, we must, in justice to their seriousness, look for some implicit, metaphorically expressed meanings which form the subject of their discussion. The issues involved in metaphysical arguments may have serious scientific or logical import but sometimes inadequate analytical methods compel the metaphysicians to express these issues in analogical fictions. Metaphorical expressions of meaning often antedate the clear analysis of their cognitive content. Numerous instances of this can be found in psychological studies of children, and in primitive anthropomorphic accounts of natural phenomena. More recondite and perhaps also more important examples are offered by the history of science. When electrical phenomena were first made the subject of extensive scientific analysis, they were explained analogically or metaphorically by the theories of the highly developed sciences of mechanics and hydrodynamics. These theories persisted in electrical science despite the fact that many of their concepts had no empirically determinable meaning in electrical phenomena. It is only in recent decades that electrical theory was freed of these mechanical fictions.

Fictions and Empirical Objects

Berkeley, Hume as well as early positivists, considered the empirical statements of science to be limited to the description of the concurrence or sequence of sensations. In opposition to rationalistic claims to *a priori,* speculative knowledge, sensationalistic empiricism (Mach, Pearson) sought to limit science to the immediate data of perception. Science, within this restriction, must avoid speculation concerning imperceptible entities. This limitation, however, excludes from science not merely the usual metaphysical concepts, but also such elements of scientific hypotheses as atoms, electrons, potentials, and forces. Strictly speaking, it would eliminate even the idea of propagated light, since light is never perceived as *moving* from one place to another. To circumvent the difficulties arising from their omission, these concepts were tolerated in science as convenient, methodological

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fictions, by means of which scientists can attain summary descriptions of intricate complexes of sense-impressions.

Russell, on the basis of a mathematical analysis of these ideas, developed the view that the imperceptible scientific objects are logical constructions by means of which successful predictions can be made concerning sense-data. While this theory was accompanied by a certain metaphysical doctrine of "neutral monism," it was a great advance over sensationalistic empiricism. It replaced the earlier descriptive criterion of empiricism with a more liberal predictive standard. Predictive criteria of empiricism had been also advanced independently by the American pragmatists and by the operationalism of P. W. Bridgman. In contemporary logical empiricism the principle is refined to a precision which, while completely excluding metaphysical terms, does not impose on science the embarrassing constraints of strict, sensationalistic empiricism.

Among the terms designating objects, properties and relations logical empiricism distinguishes two classes: *observation terms* and *non-observation terms*. In the latter are such terms as "atom," "valence," "blood pressure," " the unconscious," "dominance drive," "unemployment," while among those belonging to the former class are "potentiometer," "chemical scale," "pressure gauge," "statements made by a psychoanalytic subject," "words written on a questionnaire," "to the left of," "this and this yellow color." Statements in which all descriptive terms are observation terms form the class of *basis sentences* which is the evidential foundation of scientific knowledge. For Mach and Pearson the class of observation terms consisted entirely of terms designating sensations. This restriction was made on the principle that sensations are immediately apprehended data and so can serve as the indubitable basis of all empirical confirmation. Even the Vienna Circle in the first formulations of its methodology regarded simple statements asserting the presence or absence of specific sensations "here-now" as the ultimate, unquestionable basis sentences, or as they called them, "protocol" sentences. More recently under the influence of Carnap and Neurath logical empiricists have completely abandoned the earlier positivistic doctrines of an ultimate basis for knowledge.

In general, any term which common sense considers as designating some observable thing or property is admitted into the class of observation terms. This is entirely in keeping with the practice of science, in which even the most precise and recondite experiments are basically dependent on common sense observations, such as: "This is a glass tube containing a wire filament, etc." Science is thereby conceived not as a mode of thought radically different from com-

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mon sense, but as dependent on and continuous with it. Statements of observation are, of course, not indubitable. If in a certain inquiry there is no agreement as to whether a given assertion does or does not state an observation, it thereby becomes a *non-observation statement* which must be confirmed on the basis of *observation statements* concerning which no disagreement exists. All statements of observation cannot be questioned at once, but no statement is above question.

Every assertion of an empirical science must, according to logical empiricism, be either the statement of some observation, that is, a basis sentence, or it must be testable by observation. Similarly, every descriptive term of empirical science must be either an observation term or must be *reducible* to observation terms. Non-observation terms may be reduced to observation terms by stating the test conditions and observations by which a simple sentence using the non-observation term can be tested. If the statements describing the test include other non-observation terms, these terms must in turn be reduced, until a reduction is reached in which the test conditions and observations are described entirely by means of observation statements. A non-observation term for which no such reduction is possible is not empirical.

The principle of reducibility should clarify some remarks made above concerning the empirical requirements for literary or art criticism. Logical empiricism does not demand that every term of criticism *designate* some observable trait of the work of art. What it does require is that every term be *reducible* to observation. A criticism that satisfies this requirement will make only verifiable critical statements. A statement that does not meet this requirement says nothing concerning the subject of the criticism.

By this criterion many scientific concepts which sensationalist empiricism viewed as metaphorical become literal empirical terms. It also affords a method of determining the precise empirical content of non-observation terms of empirical science. It is important to note that this principle of reducibility does not mean that the non-observation terms could be eliminated from the language of science without any loss of content. When the term "potential" is reduced to an observation basis of pointer-readings on experimental apparatus, one cannot say that the potential is *nothing but* such pointer-readings. Failure to realize this is one of the fallacies underlying the "philosophical" speculations of Eddington. The reductions of logical empiricism state certain logical connections between terms and not—as in Eddington's metaphysics—the ontological constitution of things.

The foregoing analysis points to the conclusion that there are

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only two kinds of cognitive meanings: formal and empirical. Many philosophers, however, hold that there is a third kind, namely, metaphysical. These statements purport to make assertions concerning matters which transcend the empirical but which, nevertheless, are in some sense "real." The following sentences are typical of this class: 1) "The ultimate nature of reality is mental." 2) "Matter is real." 3) "Things are complexes of sensations." 4) "All events are predetermined." Each of these statements has been regarded as true in one or another of traditional metaphysical systems. Despite the apparently empirical content of these doctrines, logical analysis shows them to be devoid of literal assertions concerning any empirical subject matter. The third and fourth sentences turn out to be syntactical statements in metaphorical (pseudo-empirical) form. The first and second sentences are shown to be fictive statements without any metaphorical function. Like bad literary fictions, they may be cogent enough in their own world of fancy, but they have no content cognitive of the natural world.

Theories of Science and Criticism

In the present phase of its development logical empiricism has two aspects, which for the sake of clarity need to be distinguished. On the one hand it is a *theory* in the logic of science; on the other hand it is a *program* for philosophical inquiry. In its first aspect it forms assertions subject to verification by the examination of the language of science and by the observations of the operations of scientific inquiry. In its second aspect, it formulates not *assertions,* but *resolutions* or *directives* whereby it proposes to adopt certain rules and limitations for philosophical inquiry. In this latter function it is not subject to verification of any kind. It is, however, open to justification by showing that certain desirable consequences result from the acceptance of the proposed limitations.

So far we have dealt only with the assertive or theoretical phases of logical empiricism. The justification of its resolutive aspects are based on these theoretical conclusions. The analysis of science has disclosed certain criteria of empirical languages by means of which all statements can be clearly distinguished as empirical or non-empirical. The analysis of mathematics has furnished additional criteria for separating non-empirical sentences into logical-mathematical (both literal and metaphorical), and purely fictive (or cognitively meaningless) statements. On the basis of this analysis, logical empiricism proposes that philosophical statements be limited to the logical-mathematical type. In other words, it resolves to identify philosophy with logical analysis.

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Logical empiricists are not the first to make this proposal. It was made explicitly by Bertrand Russell, and it has been implicit in much of empiricist philosophy since the eighteenth century. Empiricism, especially the British and American, has set for itself mainly methodological tasks. It has considered the problems of philosophy to be analytical and critical, directed to the discovery of methods and limitations of knowledge.

The separation of empirical and philosophical inquiry has been already effected in large measure by the historical growth of science. As is well known, philosophy was the matrix out of which, in the course of time, the several sciences have crystallized. The logical empiricist program is the extension of this historical process to the point where *all* statements with empirical content are relegated to the empirical sciences.

If all study of empirical subject matter is preempted by the various empirical sciences, philosophy can raise only non-empirical problems. With respect to any special science (that is, any empirical inquiry) philosophy may concern itself with 1) non-empirical investigations of the subject matter of empirical science, or with 2) non-empirical studies of scientific inquiry itself. In the first case, the investigation presupposes that it is possible to have *a priori* knowledge of the empirical world or of a transcendent reality. It has been shown, however, that *a priori* propositions are tautologies, and that statements descriptive of "transcendent reality" are purely fictive. In the second case philosophy obviously cannot study scientific inquiry with respect to its history, its economic or sociological aspects, or with respect to the psychology of the scientist, since all these studies are empirical and are properly the tasks of history, economics, sociology, and psychology. There remains, therefore, only one type of inquiry of science which philosophy may undertake on this program, namely, the logical analysis of science.

Similar considerations apply to theories of criticism insofar as such theories are distinguished from the criticism itself. A philosophy of literary criticism must either assume that it is capable of discovering transcendent qualities of literature, or it will have to restrict itself to the discovery and analysis of formal or logical principles of literary criticism. In the former case it becomes a metaphysics of literary art such as that expressed in some passages of Plato's Phaedrus. In the latter case it is directed towards the explicit rendering of the basic presuppositions of some literary criticism and the formal relations between these postulates and the critical judgments or analyses of some literary work.

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These distinctions impose limitations not on the critic but on criticism. He may find it interesting and useful to intertwine statements in criticism with statements in the logic or philosophical theory of criticism. There is no incompatibility between these two types of propositions. Confusion would result, however, through neglect of the distinctive character of these statements, and through the consequent failure to refer them to different evidential bases. A statement of criticism must be testable by empirical operations (experiments, observations) on the subject matter of the criticism. Any alleged criticism which does not meet this requirement has no cognitive content relevant to that subject matter. It may then be a purely fictive, metaphysical statement, like some of Clive Bell's statements about "significant form," or it may be a statement in the logical analysis of criticism, in other words, a statement in the philosophy of criticism. In the latter case it must be confirmable through a logical analysis of the language and procedure of the criticism in question.

The distinction between criticism and the theory or philosophy of criticism is not quite adequately expressed through the categories "formal," "material" and "empirical." Criticism itself may be concerned with inquiries which are formal in the sense of dealing with the form or internal structure of a work of art. Some questions concerning the form of the work may be independent of questions concerning its psychological or sociological genesis. But statements answering either kind of question can be confirmed only through studies of the work itself. For this reason they are designated as *object sentences* in distinction from *syntactical sentences* which describe the formal structure not of the work of art but of the criticism. For example, consider the statement "Aesthetic value is not a property of a painting, but is a relation between a painting and a spectator." This sentence, despite appearances, is not an object sentence and asserts nothing concerning paintings. It is a metaphorical statement whose cognitive meaning is given by the following syntactical sentence: "The expression 'aesthetic value' is a predicate which takes not one but two terms for its arguments. One of its arguments is the designation of a painting, the other is the designation of a spectator." This is a statement not about *paintings,* but about the use—within some system of criticism—of *terms* designating paintings.

Value, Science and Method of Social Action

Numerous attempts have been made to distinguish between natural and social sciences on the ground that social sciences include value judgments whereas natural sciences do not. If these views appeared plausible, it was largely because the concept of value and of

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an empirical social science were inadequately analyzed. One of the basic principles of the *International Encyclopedia of United Science* is, as the name indicates, the doctrine of the unity of science, which would preclude such radical differences between two branches of empirical inquiry. In view of this principle we raise the question as to the way in which social sciences *include* value judgments. They may do so in two ways: 1) Selective interests determined by value judgments may influence the choice of subject matter or problems with which social science is concerned. 2) Value judgments may be part of the chain of propositions by which empirical assertions in social science are confirmed.

In the first case such selective interests are not peculiar to the social sciences. All sciences, indeed all human enterprises, are guided by such valuations more or less consciously entertained. In the second case value judgments employed in an empirical social science would have to be operationally testable, while the term "value" would have to be introduced into the science either as an observation term or as a term which is reducible to observation terms. Value judgments which satisfy these requirements are, with respect to their operational function in science, exactly like any other empirical statement: objective and publicly confirmable.

Important practical issues are involved in the methodology of the social sciences. The application to the problems of social life of the methods of inquiry which have been so successfully used in the natural sciences depend to a great extent on our analysis of such concepts as *value, interest,* and conscious *purpose.* Are these vital factors in human activity empirically determinable by their operational consequences, or are they intelligible only through some direct, intuitive apprehension? Upon the answers to such questions depends the manner in which social problems are approached. In these differences of method, rather than in the metaphysical doctrines, lie the basic issues between materialistic and idealistic interpretations of history and society.

In one important respect Hegelian idealism and Marxist materialism have a common approach to the question here raised. Both philosophies in their stress on the temporal, historical character of "reality" preclude immediate intuitive meanings. Meanings are not inherent in the static "nature" or "being" of things. They are revealed in their "becoming" and developments. Or, as one might say, the intelligible nature and essence of all things *are* their interactive relations and historical processes. This metaphysical doctrine finds its logical counterpart in the operational theory of meaning to which logical empiricism has given a formalized, systematic expression. The

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meaning of statements and terms consists of their operational development and of processes of transformation within the subject matter to which they claim relevance. All terms of discourse must certify their pertinence to any inquiry by establishing their competence in directing such operations and transformations.

The concepts of value, interest and purpose are no exceptions. If they have meanings in social science, they must indicate modes of behavior and interaction within the social nexus. But they can do this only if they are—as logical empiricism requires—reducible to observation. This requirement is central to the principles of *physicalism* according to which a scientific language in which all terms are reducible to observation is sufficient for the analysis of all natural and social phenomena. In this principle logical empiricism states the cognitive content of the materialistic metaphysics of Marxism.

Marxism as an empirical social *science* is also Marxism as a *method* of revolutionary action. This relation between systemic science and practical method is not peculiar to Marxism. Every significant social theory states implicity a method of social action. This is the practical bearing of the logical empiricist analysis of meaning. The need for social action demands that social science be unencumbered by doctrines which have no active, operative significance. To this end logical empiricism offers a powerful critique which has repeatedly proved its effectiveness in the analysis of natural science, but whose full advantages still await realization in the field of esthetics, ethics, and political thought.

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Art Chronicle:

Art Versus Method

The current survey of the Bauhaus and its teaching methods is ideally suited to the policies of the Museum of Modern Art, for whom historical sequence has from the start been more interesting than the showing of good paintings. When fine works have found their way into these precincts, the impression has been customarily spoiled by juxtaposing any kind of rubbish that might make a historical connection apparent; on these principles a laudable undertaking like *Toward Abstraction* in 1936 became speedily reduced to a chilly autopsy of the subject.

At any rate, the Museum found it difficult to spoil the odds and ends that found their way out of Germany into the present exhibition, as they were nearly all uniformly bad to begin with. The only works that might be said to suffer from more noisome neighbors were the Klees, and they were not very good Klees at that. It is unfortunate that the work produced by the Bauhaus should have been of this order, as its history is full of enlightenment. It probably did more to promote modern architecture and decoration than any other specific organization, and furthermore it is hard today for anyone to disparage an educational center disrupted by der Führer on esthetic grounds. The past has often disclosed that the German temperament, so at home within the limits of tonal and musical structure, flattens out before plastic problems into a heavy slickness and bad taste; with an unmistakably Prussian thoroughness the Bauhaus demonstrates the extent to which it is possible for method to triumph over quality. The insensitive touch is apparent in the work of pupil and master alike, in the painting, the sculpture, the pottery, the furniture, and in the peep-shows that the Museum evidently intended as a lure for the uninitiated.

Turning from the Exhibition to the Catalog we are confronted with something vastly more absorbing. Here are gathered all the enlightened devices for instruction and presentation that must have made life at the Bauhaus a joy for student and teacher alike. Every one was taught to be completely free with his hands, and this is certainly the essence of plastic creation. The pupils cooked, and wove, and danced, and worked in the garden. They sang Bauhaus songs and printed Bauhaus books. Surely these paths were in the right direction, and if the School had continued perhaps such efforts after a complete life and culture would have fructified. The suspicion lurks, however, that a thoroughly conscious and analytical presentation of esthetics can become a drag, not only on the pupil, but on the instructor who devises it as well.

Whatever may be the value of the Bauhaus output, there is no denying its influence. And our own land of dismal art-schools and intellectually defunct cultural presentation should long be grateful for this glimpse into an

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institution that had for its center one of the masterpieces of modern architecture, and which, despite every sort of antagonism, was for nine years a positive reality.

Not many of the visitors to the Bauhaus Exhibition were aware that only a block away the Jacques Seligmann Galleries had been showing some marvelous paintings by Juan Gris. It is a sorry comment on the status of our cultural mentors that, although Juan Gris has been dead for twelve years, a dealer should be the first to stage the essential retrospective show. This Exhibition ought to have been put on, if not by the Metropolitan, at least by the Museum of Modern Art, and such resources of publicity might have induced quite a different reception.

It is regrettable that more people did not attend, as the Gris show will go down as one of the few great exhibitions that New York has been privileged to witness, although the contemporary press will show little enough to prove it. One and all the newspapers and periodicals concentrated on a wan and dated demonstration of Gros, Delacroix, and Géricault that happened to open the same day in another gallery, and when they were through recounting the stories of their lives and pictures, there was very little room for Juan Gris; and what could the impudent critics have written about him anyway? Gris has never been easy to write about. He did not assault the public with anything comparable to Picasso's sensational impasto, nor does he lure the spectator with the engaging succulence of Braque. His work was always very reticent. One must go back to his pictures to uncover an essentially Spanish charm and monumentality of style. There is at times the coldness, the arid opposition of pale red and grey that makes him reminiscent of Zurbaran. But there is an aristocratic suavity that none of the earlier Spaniards, nor our Spanish contemporaries either, could surpass. What Juan Gris was able to learn by himself was the very quality that the Bauhaus teaching methods were categorically forced to omit. For it cannot be taught at all. As an example, Gris might put down a black shape where many students could be shown that the composition required black; but the blackness of Gris has grown into a tonality for the exact absorption of the form, that will make it sing with every opposition out to the canvas limits. Only years of culture and an inborn feeling for style can dictate what such a black should be.

All the paintings in the show were not of equal merit, yet the level was surprisingly sustained. None of the important canvases were spoiled by shockingly inferior works adjacent, as the Picassos in recent exhibitions tend increasingly to become. As in the case of his Cubist associates the works of Gris begin to fall off in quality after about 1923. Whether he would have followed them in their more recent débacles is problematic. It may have been his early death, however, that has caused him to be eclipsed by his contemporaries, yet it is not improbable that he may some day lead the field. It took Vermeer three hundred years, after all, to find his level, and so it is that quality seems to win in the end. For the present, Juan Gris can stand as one of the few authentic conquerors of a critical period in art-history.

GEORGE L. K. MORRIS

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Soviet Society and Its Cinema

Dwight Macdonald

"The brightest hopes of mankind are being fulfilled in the Soviet Union, where all life is based on the doctrine of socialism. Art is still lagging behind the practice of triumphant socialism . . . It sees the future very dimly."—*Moscow News*, June 9, 1934. (From an article on the cinema by Sergei Dinamov, then editor of *International Literature*, recently reported under arrest.)

"It seems to me that our intelligentsia are living in a particularly happy time . . . We will love our intelligentsia just as we love the Red Army. (*Stormy applause.*) And the Red Army we love very much! (*Applause.*) The Soviet system alone gives the intelligentsia an opportunity to unfold its creative powers. . . . We shall release such forces that the mere thought of it makes us breathless. (*Applause.*) Comrades! On December 19 we shall all vote for the Communist Party, for him who expresses the aspirations of the people, Comrade Stalin! (*Stormy applause, turning into an ovation, shouts of 'Hurrah!'*) For the Soviet intelligentsia! For the creative work of the Soviet intelligentsia! (*Another outburst of applause and repeated shouts of 'Hurrah!'*)"—From a speech delivered on November 26, 1937, by Premier Kalenin before the representatives of the Soviet Toiling Intelligentsia of Leningrad.

In earlier issues of Partisan Review, I have traced the decline of the Soviet cinema from what was in my opinion, the major art form of this century, to something that more and more closely approaches the output of Hollywood. In this concluding article, my purpose is to analyze the social and political factors in this deterioration.

The old-fashioned, unreconstructed liberals—as against the neo-Stalinist variety—explain the decline of Soviet cinema in terms of state control of the individual. The artist, they say, cannot create great works when art is made a state activity and is required to turn out 'propaganda.' This explanation is especially persuasive nowadays, when totalitarianism is getting such a bad press. And it is indeed true, as I have already shown in detail, that the policies of the Kremlin have been chiefly responsible for what has happened to the cinema since 1930. But from this historical fact it is not possible to deduce an abstract principle of esthetics. It is not the mere *fact* of political control, but the *direction* of this control that has been damaging. In the twenties, the Soviet cinema drew its very breath of life from a close connection with the Soviet state. In the thirties, this integration has

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poisoned it. The great period of production began in 1924, when the first systematic effort was made to integrate the cinema into the political structure. But in recent years, every such extension of political control has meant one more stifling, paralyzing influence. Thus, too, with propaganda. The silent cinema reached its esthetic heights precisely when its social message began to be most emphasized; the great directors found 'propaganda' a major source of inspiration. But since 1930, the less politics in a film, the better it is likely to be.

The Stalinists—excepting, of course, those simple-minded souls who still insist the Soviet cinema is triumphantly advancing—offer an explanation in social terms that seems, at first glance, to be more plausible. The Russian masses are backward, and so, in the world's premier democracy, democratic art must be simple and even, by our standards, a bit crude. But this explanation, too, overlooks the fact that the masses were even more backward in 1925-1929, when the Russian cinema was the most esthetically advanced in the world. As we shall see, Eisenstein and Pudovkin were well aware of this backwardness, and to some extent based their approach on it. But today this same low level of culture becomes the justification for the banalities which are produced in the name of socialist realism.

The key to these contradictory effects, in different periods, of the same social factors cannot be found in abstract generalizations. It is necessary to examine these factors historically, and to inquire into their relation to the profound political changes that have taken place in the U.S.S.R.

I. THE CINEMA AND THE STATE

"Art Has Its Own Laws" vs. "Art Is a Class Weapon"

The great Bolsheviks had more understanding of avant-garde politics than of avant-garde art. "I have the courage to appear a 'barbarian'," Lenin told Clara Zetkin. "I cannot appraise the works of expressionism, futurism, cubism and other 'isms' as the highest manifestations of artistic genius. I do not understand them. I take no joy in them."[104] But these politicians showed an intelligent tolerance towards the 'advanced' poetry and painting and architecture that surged up in the wake of their revolution—and in which they took no joy. They recognized the boundary line between art and politics, and they had no illusions about settling such issues by administrative decree. (Lenin is said to have attended a big show of constructivist art during the civil war. He looked around in ironical bewilderment, shrugged his shoulders and remarked, "I don't understand, but it's no business of mine. It's Lunacharsky's headache!") In their own

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field, artists were allowed almost complete autonomy. "Art has its own laws," wrote Trotsky.[105] "Every artist, and every one who regards himself as such, claims as his proper right the liberty to work freely according to his ideal, whether it is any good or not," said Lenin.[106] They realized that art cannot be produced to order, that the artist cannot function properly if he is stripped of his freedom, his independence, his dignity.

Such trifles mean nothing to Stalin, 'the practical realist.' The dangerous formulation of the RAPP—"Art is a class weapon"—has been officially repudiated, but in practice it is still observed. The result has been the terrible sterility which I have already described in all fields of Soviet culture. More and more the Kremlin admonishes its artists to sing sweetly (or else!), and more and more, with the best will in the world, they remain silent. The old Bolsheviks had more conservative tastes in art than one might wish, but Stalin is a Philistine, so unconscious of his own limitations that he does not hesitate to interfere in the most intimate way in all fields of culture. Everything from opera to astronomy has felt the Kremlin's heavy hand. He receives a delegation of writers and urges them to create according to the precepts of socialist realism, which he thoughtfully defines for them. He helps make a movie—and *Lenin in October* is the result. He receives Dzerzhinsky, composer of 'tuneful' operas, to congratulate him and to warn him against the errors of Shostakovitch—and the Association of Soviet Composers passes a resolution: "The attention given to Soviet music by Comrade Stalin augurs very well indeed for its future expansion, etc., etc."[107] Such 'cultural directives' as Comrade Stalin has not time to give himself, other residents of the Kremlin hand down to the bewildered—and apprehensive—artists.

Viewed from the outside, the endless scholastic discussions between Soviet critics as to the real nature of 'Leninist criticism' as against 'vulgar sociologism' have their humorous aspect. Once inside those well-patrolled borders, however, and it is no joking matter. Esthetic criticism is implemented by the full power of the totalitarian state. The Moscow Art Theatre has been officially recognized as the flag-bearer of socialist realism in the theatre, and if any one should make bold to point out that it is actually, as the terms are generally used, naturalistic rather than realistic in its tendencies—he would find the well-known dramatic critic, Comrade Stalin, in flat disagreement, and the discussion would be likely to terminate in a Siberian lumber camp. It would also not be advisable to remark too publicly on the paradox that socialist realism in the cinema has meant the return of all the old artificial conventions of the theatre. When the distinction between 'socialist realism,' 'formalism,' 'naturalism,' and

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'romantic heroics' becomes a matter of political (and sometimes literal!) life and death, the discussion is not likely to prove very fruitful.

It is not, of course, merely or even primarily a matter of Stalin's being a barbarian. It is true, most unhappily for Soviet art, that Stalin was almost the only important leader among the makers of the 1917 revolution who had not spent any time in exile, and hence that he was comparatively narrow, uncultivated, and provincial. But if the Russia of Lenin and Trotsky permitted the development of avant-garde art, it was despite the leaders' personal lack of interest in it and because its political movement was forward, towards socialism, and so could not but open out a free field for advanced art.

Likewise, by its very nature, the Stalin regime must pursue a reactionary policy in art. Unable to conceive of such matters except on the lowest, most vulgar plane, it 'integrates' art with the state by the bluntest sort of police measures. Its first recorded exploit in the cinema was a typical piece of petty vandalism perpetrated on Eisenstein's great film of the October revolution. According to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "*October* was to have greeted the delegates to the tenth anniversary celebration of the October Revolution, but an absolute censorship of all the parts played by the recently exiled members of the opposition required laborious re-cutting. As a result, it was not completed until five months later."[108] One scene, however, in which the actor playing Trotsky had his back to the camera, was overlooked. When the film was first shown, Trotsky's figure was recognized—and applauded. At once, the lights were turned up in the theatre, and GPU men walked up and down the aisles looking for those who had clapped.[109] This excellent beginning has been steadily improved on, until today an agent of the Secret Police heads the entire cinema industry, and, according to recent visitors, every movie set is guarded by a soldier with rifle and fixed bayonet.[110]

Propaganda . . . and Propaganda

A great deal has been written about propaganda in the Soviet cinema, most of it rather beside the point. There is propaganda—and propaganda. Those bourgeois critics who have dismissed Soviet films as 'propaganda' really mean that it presents certain social values which they find strange—and hostile. If 'propaganda' be used to describe such general expressions of *weltanschauung* as *Arsenal* or *Potemkin,* then the term must include also most other past and present artistic productions. Up to 1930, those in control of the Soviet state asked of the cinema only the most general sort of propaganda, celebrating the triumph of socialism, exposing the decadence of capitalism, giving the masses a sense of the heroism of *their* revolution. The present regime, however, has been more specific in its demands.

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It has degraded the cinema to an instrument of factional warfare, using it ruthlessly to further whatever immediate political aims it happens to have at the moment. Such films are useful objects rather than works of art. Once the political maneuver has been executed, or has failed, the films it called forth are interesting only to the historian. But a movie like *Arsenal,* broadly revolutionary in spirit and springing out of a great social upheaval—not some 'line' or 'directive' cooked up by the Kremlin—remains valid regardless of the fortunes of the revolution. Its roots strike deep into history.

The general point to be made is that in the twenties, 'propaganda' meant that the Soviet directors made films expressing certain basic social values with which they were in ardent sympathy. The word, 'sympathy,' in fact, is not accurate since it implies a detachment which was not the case: they were part of the society founded on those values, and this self-identification was a potent inspiration to them. In the thirties, they must become political hacks, lending their talents to whatever maneuver the Kremlin has put on the order of the day, obediently and fearfully treading the official line as laid down from on high, a line whose relevance to the interests of socialism may not be at all clear to them—or, worse, may be only too clear. It is significant that such films of a general revolutionary nature (with certain 'deformations,' to be sure) as are still made tend to be on a higher artistic level than the rest. One thinks of *Chapayev, Baltic Deputy, The Last Night, We Are from Kronstadt, The Youth of Maxim.* (For an account of the 'deformations' in one of these films, see Victor Serge's letter on page 123 of this issue.) And one remembers the official astonishment at the success of *Chapayev,* which "was based on a theme that was generally considered to have become boring for Soviet audiences—the civil war."[111] Here the Kremlin seems once more to have confused its own reactions with those of the masses.

The Stalin policies in cinema have followed two superficially contradictory courses: films have more and more come either to have the immediate, practical political aims described above, or else to drop all propaganda, specific and general alike, in favor of what Hollywood calls 'entertainment value.' I have already described this latter category of films, which tend, if anything, to be even worse than the political films. They, too, reflect the reactionary political aims of the regime, but in a negative way. During the first five-year plan, the movies were pressed into service to propagandize for the thesis that socialism can be built in one country. More recently, the movies have been called on to popularize an even bigger lie: that socialism *has* been built in one country. If socialism really had been won, if the living conditions of the Soviet masses had actually risen above those

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of their brothers in capitalist America, then there would be no need for the cinema to continue to propagandize for socialism. But the banalities in such films give the lie to the Kremlin, for if all this were true, then the cultural level of Soviet society would be at least as high as that of Hollywood. As it is, the crudity of these films, far from being an expression of a healthy new society, is as much a reflection of the reactionary nature of the regime as was the burning for political heresy, several years ago, of Eisenstein's film *Bezhin Lug*.[112]

If one considers how far Russia still is from socialism, how backward socially and industrially compared to capitalist nations, how grim and penurious life really is for the Russian masses, it is hard to see much difference between the 'escapist' movies of Hollywood and Moscow. A film studio can be a dream factory, whether it is on the shores of the Black Sea or of the Pacific.

II. THE CINEMA AND THE MASSES

Art and Blast Furnaces

In these articles I have emphasized, perhaps too much, the part played by the conscious policies of the Stalin regime in the decline of the cinema. The responsibility of the Kremlin is indeed heavy. But let us not deceive ourselves. The Stalinist Thermidor has succeeded only because it found a response in the Russian masses. The basic fact about Russia today, as in 1917, is that it is a backward nation, culturally and otherwise. This backwardness is not a failing of the Russian 'national character,' nor is it what the Ivory Tower esthetes think it is: the immemorial stigma of the vulgar herd. It is a historical phenomenon which can be traced to nothing more mysterious than the fact that up to 1917 some 70% of the population could neither read nor write. "We are a dark people," said the moujiks of Holy Russia. Illiteracy for the masses was a deliberate policy of the Czar, whose regime in turn was a reflection of the low level of production. A lack of blast furnaces expressed itself ultimately in a lack of taste.

Such evidence as I have been able to find as to the popular response to the cinema is not very satisfactory. The inarticulateness of the Soviet masses and the increasing difficulty of any spontaneous expression of their preferences make any final judgment difficult. But there are a few fragmentary indications. One recent visitor reports that movie audiences shout encouragement to the hero, groan at the villain, produce imitation kisses during the love scenes, and so on.[113] Another writes: "Strangely enough, though Soviet films were among the first to develop to a high degree complete naturalism in screen

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acting, Soviet audiences do not seem to mind seriously the type of film which features good old-fashioned theatricalism, with heaving bosoms, exaggerated gestures, artificial pauses, and everything heavily underscored."[114]

At the height of the great period of Soviet cinema, one finds the masses showing a preference for the Hollywood product. The popular success of the 1925 season in Moscow was not *Potemkin* but Douglas Fairbanks in *The Thief of Bagdad.* "American films," Paxton Hibben wrote in 1925, "dominate, inundate, glut, overwhelm the Russian motion picture houses today. Clara Kimball Young has a theatre solely devoted to her in Moscow."[115] Unable to afford to import enough American films to supply the demand, Soviet studios turned out imitation 'Amerikansky Kartiny,' with 'American' lighting, camera tricks, and fast action. Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford had their Russian incarnations. Bolshevik Buster Keatons were chased by OGPU-Keystone cops around the Red Square. These films played to packed houses.[116] When Sovkino issued a report showing large profits for 1927, the bureaucrat Yaroslavsky complained: "Neither *Mother* nor *Potemkin* was produced by Sovkino, which prefers quick profits on foreign bourgeois films to building up home products suitable for workers and peasants." He criticized Sovkino sharply for signalizing the tenth anniversary of 1917 with a showing of the Hollywood film, *Scaramouche,* with great profit. The difficulty, he admitted, was that audiences seemed to prefer "the comic, picturesque or adventurous pictures from America" to the esthetically and politically superior Soviet productions.[117] So too with the popular response to the Russian films themselves. Pudovkin's *The End of St. Petersburg,* which at least had a hero and a plot, was more popular than Eisenstein's *October,* more interesting esthetically but also more difficult.[118] Two years later, Pudovkin's *Storm Over Asia* was more enthusiastically received inside Russia, and for the same reasons, than Eisenstein's *The General Line.*[119] Probably the greatest box-office success among all Russian films has been *Chapayev,* which is well described as "a talking film of normal technique."

The Problem of Mass Taste

The Russian masses like the Hollywood type of film. Therefore, the world's premier democracy should give them such films, which it is now doing. So runs the simple reasoning of the Stalinists. All too simple. The matter is not as mechanical as that.

There is, for example, in Moscow the Museum of Western Art, which contains a famous collection of modern French paintings, from

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Cézanne to Picasso. There is also the Tretyakov Gallery, devoted mostly to the works of the Russian academicians of the last century. The Museum of Western Art is always empty, the Tretyakov always crowded. A recent special exhibition at the Tretyakov of canvasses by these academicians—Repin, Surikov, Kramskoi, Perov and other equally celebrated painters of battle scenes and winter sunsets—was visited by 700,000 people. A one-man show of Repin's work drew 8,000 on its opening day—as against 3,600 for a Rembrandt opening in the same gallery. This disproportion apparently didn't bother *Moscow News,* which moralized contentedly: "In the Soviet Union, those masters of the brush, Rembrandt and Repin, have a mass following that cannot be dreamed of elsewhere in the world today." When Repin is bracketed with Rembrandt, strange things may be expected to happen in the art world. One reads of the housewife Nikolskaya, who wrote in the visitors' book of one museum, apropos of certain 'formalist' canvasses: "They are stupidities which it would be better not to show." A Moscow journal adds: "She was right, and they have long since been replaced by others of a much higher artistic value."

But before one agrees with the Webbs that the Soviet Union is a democratic heaven, two questions must be asked: (1) to what degree is this expression of popular taste spontaneous and to what degree is it stimulated by official policy?, and (2) could this policy conceivably have guided mass taste into other channels?

In the example just given, these questions can be answered quite easily. The state has treated the Museum of Western Art as a veritable Cinderella, cutting its appropriation and selling abroad many of its masterpieces.* The Tretyakov, on the other hand, has had its budget steadily increased, until today it stands at 4,000,000 rubles a year. If housewife Nikolskaya had asked for more, not less, abstract paintings, would her preferences have been taken so seriously?[120]

But, some will say, she 'naturally' preferred realism to abstraction because she was a housewife. This leads to the second question: could any other orientation have been given to popular taste? In his *Seven Soviet Arts,* Kurt London gives a good answer:

"Artists like Kokoschka and Pechstein, Kubin and Picasso, Archipenko and Epstein, have each in their own sphere developed a great amount of revolutionary ideas and influences. Today their style is repudiated in the Soviet Union as 'formalistic,' as a manifestation

* The story is told that the directress of this museum, on opening up one morning, noticed that a valuable Cezanne had been removed during the night and the other pictures rearranged so as to conceal the loss. She at once called the police, only to discover that the noctural raid had been carried out on orders from the Kremlin, which happened to need *valuta.* The authorities had apparently hoped that she would not notice the loss.

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of Western decadence, as individualism without any contact with the masses.

"These masses originally had, however, just as little connection with old art as with the new, because formerly the politico-economic systems of their countries offered them no opportunity of getting to know and understand it. Western art has for centuries lived without associations with the masses, particularly in the classical period which today occupies such a dominant position in the U.S.S.R. Thus the attitude of the masses both to the old and new art styles probably remains essentially dependent on the nature of the education afforded them by their respective states."

Why, after all, should ignorant peasants prefer Repin to Picasso, whose abstract technique is at least as relevant to their own primitive folk art as is the former's realistic style? No, if the masses crowd into the Tretyakov, it is largely because they have been conditioned to shun "formalism" and to admire "socialist realism." The regime has conducted this conditioning with its usual thoroughness, and for its own political ends.

As for the cinema, the first question has already been answered in detail in the course of these articles. But the second question, of the inevitability of what has happened, is worth spending some time on here. As we shall shortly see, the Eisenstein-Pudovkin school based their approach largely on the principle which London states above. Were they "Utopian visionaries"? The description I have given of the mass response to their films might seem to indicate they were. But the fact that it has been easy to popularize the conventional Hollywood type of film does not mean that it is impossible to interest the masses in something more advanced. "In Russia," wrote an English journalist recently, "*all* films are popular. A vast public, much of it still in the early stage of movie fascination, is hungry for films, and there are nowhere near enough efficient craftsmen to produce them. A failure in our sense of the word does not exist."[121] This would seem to be an ideal situation for raising the level of mass taste. The quotation from London given above indicates that "formalism" is not necessarily any bar to a popular response in the Soviet Union. There is also some interesting evidence that, in social content (as against esthetic form), the Eisenstein-Pudovkin cinema was in some ways more appealing to the masses than the present realistic films.

Speaking at the 1935 conference, L. Trauberg, the director, made a comparison: "Chapayev is a hero, but he is not above the heads of the audience. He is their brother. But in *October* the people were very high up."[122] But perhaps the people like to see

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themselves "high up". There is in the great silent films a quality of idealization of the masses which is lacking in more recent films. The "formalistic" style was as well fitted to express this mass heroism and pathos as the flat realistic style of today is not.

The pattern of development is clear. First the masses were exalted into the great symbolic hero of the Russian film; then they were reduced to their "proper" scale and portrayed, vodka, warts, lice and all, in the early social-realist films; and lately they have been more and more crowded off the screen altogether by the gigantic images of their Great Leaders. What has happened comes out clearly in a speech Eisenstein made at the 1935 conference. (That his intention was to justify, not expose, makes his words all the more revealing.) "It is not accidental," he said, "that precisely at this period, for the first time in our cinematography, there begin to appear the first finished images of personalities—not just any personalities, but of the finest personalities: the leading figures of leading Communists and Bolsheviks. Just as from the revolutionary movement of the masses emerged the sole revolutionary party, that of the Bolsheviks, which heads the unconscious elements of revolution and leads them towards conscious revolutionary aims, so the film images of the leading men of our time begin during the present period to crystallize out of the general-revolutionary mass-quality of the earlier type of film."[123]

* * *

I have shown—or tried to—the unreality of the old-fashioned liberals' analysis of the decline of the Soviet cinema as the result of its integration with the State, and I have also exposed the shortcomings of the Stalinist contention that present-day films merely reflect the backwardness of the Russian masses. I have also indicated specifically what I conceive to have been the effects of these factors in different historical periods. I should like to conclude with a brief exploration of the political roots of the various esthetic tendencies—and especially of the "Stalin School"—in the history of the Soviet cinema.

III. THE HERMETIC CINEMA

The 1917 revolution, sweeping aside the lumber of the old order, opened a wide field to avant-garde art. In the first decade after 1917, the Soviet Union was the scene of a veritable renaissance of such tendencies: Mayakovsky and the LEF group in literature, Malievitch and Kandinsky in painting, the formalist and the con-

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structivist schools of architecture, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Dovschenko in the cinema, Tairov and Meyerhold in the theatre. But it was not long before these groups found themselves opposed by more conventional, even reactionary artists, who had laid low during the whirlwind of revolution, but who now were emboldened to raise their heads again as it became evident that Holy Russia was still a vast and semi-literate land, revolution or no revolution. Finding no stable base in Russian society, the avant-garde in one field of art after another was ousted by the reactionaries, just as the Old Bolsheviks, whose advanced political theories similarly clashed with a backward society, were gradually reduced to impotence by the Stalin bureaucracy. The recent humbling of Meyerhold marks the end of the long struggle in the arts, as the execution of Bukharin means the end in politics. The inertia of Mother Russia has triumphed—for how long is another question.

In the cinema, by its nature the most popular of all modern arts, the struggle between those who fought to hold the gains of the revolution, and those who based themselves on the backwardness of Russia, has been raised to its most dramatic intensity. Soviet directors of every school have had to accept as a basic factor the low cultural level of the masses. These masses have never been articulate enough to create their own cinema—the movies are hardly a folk art! All that has been done, has been done from outside, from above, by intellectuals and politicians, and the victory of the Stalin School is not due to its expressing any "natural," "spontaneous" mass urge, but to its alliance with a victorious political machine.

Since 1917, three major tendencies can be defined. Between 1917 and 1924, Lunacharsky, the Commissar of Education, attacked the problem honestly, but with none too much imagination. He used the film as a reproductive mechanism, to bring to the masses the great stage and literary classics. From 1925 through 1929 the Eisenstein-Pudovkin-Kuleshov approach was dominant. This took advantage of the very primitiveness of the people to create an art which struck out in new paths, unencumbered by traditional luggage. From the organization of the All Union Soviet Film Trust up to the present, the Stalin bureaucracy has been dominant and by now has crushed all other tendencies. The specific esthetic line has swung from "100% proletarian" propaganda for the first five year plan to the "pure entertainment" films of today, but whatever its specific content, the Stalinist line has consistently degraded the cinema to a political instrument and has cynically appealed to the most debased level of popular taste.

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Lunacharsky's was the most direct approach to the problem. The moujik is "dark"? Then enlighten him! Benevolently, somewhat in the social worker manner, he introduced the workers to their cultural heritage. The theatre and the cinema he seems to have looked on mostly as a relaxation for the toiling masses after a day spent in the unesthetic factory. He encouraged the production of the Russian stage classics, and is said to have objected to the predominance of leftist propaganda on the Moscow stage in the early twenties.[124] But he shared the admirable tolerance of the other Bolshevik leaders towards the new trends in art. In 1924 he even ventured to experiment in the movies on his own hook, with the production of *Aelita,* a Martian fantasy with futurist sets by Meyerhold. But the radicalism in *Aelita,* as in the contemporary German film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,* was confined to the setting and costumes. Otherwise, the film was the usual photographic record of a stage play—in this case, a non-realistic play. The experiment was not successful. Mme. Lunacharsky, herself a well-known actress, was probably thinking of *Aelita* when she said that they had made an attempt to break with realism and to give a revolutionary form ("including futurism and cubism") to the movies. "But we soon realized that this . . . was not adapted to the primitive, unsophisticated hosts of new movie patrons."[125] So they went back to realistic versions of Tolstoy and Chekhov, acted out before the camera by the Moscow Art players. And indeed, as the Germans also discovered after *Caligari,* they were on a road that ended in a blind alley. The cinema couldn't get its revolution second-hand, from the stage.

That same "primitive, unsophisticated" audience which had frightened the Lunacharskys back to the safety of realism had a contrary effect on the rising new school of Eisenstein-Pudovkin-Kuleshov. On the basis of the discoveries of Freud and Pavlov (who placed at their disposal his laboratory for the study of reflex actions), they developed an art form which affected the audience at its most primitive level, striking through the layer of conscious culture down to the reflexes and the Freudian unconscious. Esthetes and peasants respond with the same visceral reaction to stimuli like the well-known machine gun bit in *October* or the massacre on the steps in *Potemkin.* This psychological theory was the foundation for a technique which was purely cinematic, free from the literary-dramatic conventions of the usual film. They reasoned that the very cultural innocence of the Russian masses made it possible to approach them with such a technique. Since Soviet culture had to be built from the ground up—that is, from the level of actual literacy—why should it not be

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built along the same advanced lines as the new political structure? Thus the extremes met: the Left Bank, which had rejected the academic tradition, and the Russian village, which had never heard of it.

At first glance, the 'Stalin School' seems merely to have returned to the Lunacharsky tradition. The literary classics are being exhumed again to stalk before the cameras, the Moscow Art players are back, even in the works of Eisenstein and Pudovkin, there is an end of montage, of the 'mass film', the 'intellectual cinema' and all such experimentation. But there is a difference. Once the cinema had progressed from Lunacharsky to Eisenstein, it became historically impossible for it *merely* to return to the more primitive level. Just as there is an important difference between the behavior of a real baby and the behavior of a dementia praecox patient who has regressed to an infantile state, so the Soviet cinema of today, far from being the healthy expression of a crude young society, actually is a pathological regression from a higher level of consciousness. It is not a repetition but a perversion of the old Lunacharsky tradition. Those early Soviet films were clumsy, heavy, inexpert. Their contemporary prototypes are often comparatively well-mounted—though the technique never achieves Hollywood's slickness—but this superiority merely emphasizes their decadent quality. Refinement of technique accompanied by esthetic deterioration— is not this the precise definition of decadence in the arts?

In an even more important way, the Lunacharsky cinema is set off from the 'Stalin School'. Lunacharsky himself was a man of cosmopolitan outlook, and the culture he tried to bring to the 'dark' Russian masses was a European, not a Russian, culture. The films he supervised took the then new and progressive German realistic cinema as their model. So, too, with Pudovkin and Eisenstein, though their cinema based itself on another phase of European culture: the avant-garde tendencies of futurism, dadaism, expressionism, surrealism, etc. (There is a remarkable similarity in technique and psychological effect between Eisenstein's *October* and Cocteau's surrealist movie, *Blood of a Poet.*) When Eisenstein went abroad in 1930, the intelligentsia of Europe and America found that he talked their language, literally and figuratively.*

* At this period, Pudovkin, Dovschenko, and Vertov also were allowed to travel abroad. These were triumphal tours, for their work had, in general, found its most understandingly appreciative audiences *outside* the Soviet Union. The situation was paradoxical. The 1917 revolution had given Russian artists a chance to carry out their theories and develop their talents to a degree impossible elsewhere. For audiences who would fully understand their work, however, the Soviet directors had to look to those capitalist nations whose social backwardness made impossible a great cinema of their own, but whose cultural level was high enough to appreciate a great *imported* cinema.

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In their 1930 manifesto on the use of sound in cinema, Eisenstein and Pudovkin declared: "The contrapuntal method of constructing the talking film not only will not detract from the *international* [their emphasis] character of cinematography, but will enhance its significance and its cultural power to a degree inexperienced hitherto. Applying this method of construction, the film will not be confined within any national market, as . . . will be the case with the film 'theatre dramas'."[126]

But it was precisely this *international* character of the Eisenstein cinema that most alarmed the Kremlin. If the masses are to accept the present totalitarian dictatorship as a fully realized socialist society, they must be cut off from contact with more advanced cultures. And so, in the last ten years, the Soviet Union has been slowly isolated. Its borders are the most hermetically sealed in the world, and against foreign book, newspapers, movies, ideas, even more rigidly than against persons. The mere arrival of a letter with a foreign stamp may be embarassing to an artist or intellectual. The present Soviet cinema is part of a gigantic campaign to persuade the Russian masses that, under the wise guidance of Comrade Stalin, they have already scaled the topmost peaks of culture. This campaign is designed to reinforce, not to combat, those characteristic defects of backward cultures: provincial smugness, the ignorant acceptance of inferior, banal art forms as 'healthy' and 'normal', and a corresponding suspicion of more advanced forms. This is what, esthetically, the theory of 'Socialism in One Country' has meant.

The logic of the campaign has also led to the interdiction of all communication with the Soviet's own cultural past, so deeply influenced by European tendencies. It is dangerous for intellectuals to have statements they made in the twenties brought to light again today. Furthermore, each time the 'line' changes, the preceding orientation becomes anathema, and another whole cultural period must be wiped off the slate. The sheer waste of this process is shocking: the social-realist cinema, for example, has made no use of the discoveries made by the Eisenstein school, which have been violently rejected as 'formalistic' heresy—a matter for the police. Deprived of all fertilizing contact with its own past or with other cultures, Soviet culture has become sterile and debased. From the most international of all modern cultures, it has shrunk to the most meanly parochial.

But the process has had its compensations for the Kremlin, which finds such a culture much easier to manipulate for its own quite practical ends. It worries not at all that the final result has been the erosion of all specifically cultural values, leaving only the hard, naked substratum of political aims. These gentlemen of the Kremlin

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are practical men. And so they bear no malice towards the artists they have brought to heel at last, after so many years of struggle. Eisenstein's new film, *Alexander Nevsky,* properly chauvinistic in content and purged of all formalist tendencies, seems to have restored him to full official favor—just as Shostakovitch has returned to grace now that he has taken to writing 'tunes you can whistle'. It is even reported that, after the preview of *Alexander Nevsky* in the Kremlin, Comrade Stalin himself clapped Eisenstein on the back and told him: "You're a good Bolshevik."[127]

* * *

To men of more good will than political acumen, there seems to be a baffling contradiction between what they call 'the Russian experiment' in general and what has been happening in the cinema and other arts. Thus in *The Seven Soviet Arts*—on the whole a most intelligent and valuable collection of data—Kurt London writes:

"It is a fact that new revolutionary political ideas are faced with reactionary stylistic principles in art. The same Government that is so courageously piloting the ship of state through the uncharted seas of socialistic practice is enjoining its artists to stay behind in safe haven . . . Everything that we members of the Western orbit of culture call 'modern art' is today emphatically rejected in the U.S.S.R. On the other hand, that which seems to us obsolete, antiquated, even reactionary, is encouraged."

As Stalinist critics of his book have not failed to point out, this is an impossible contradiction. They resolve it, of course, by saying that Soviet art *is* progressive. Mr. London, who seems to be a liberal of the unreconstructed variety, tries to resolve it by the *argumentum ad hominem* so dear to liberals. "In Moscow," he writes, "these men, so clever in other respects, did not know the meaning of modern music, modern literature, modern painting, modern architecture. Because they did not understand it they negatived it." But we have already seen that the Old Bolsheviks did not understand such things either—granted that their benightedness did not approach the Stygian blackness of their successors!—and yet their cultural policy was admirably tolerant. The key to the riddle, as I have tried to show, lies not in individual shortcomings, but in a general Thermidorean reaction spreading out from the political sphere to corrupt and paralyze all culture. The Soviet ship of state, far from sailing 'the uncharted seas of socialistic practice', lies rotting at anchor in the same stagnant harbor—how 'safe' is another question!—to which it has confined its artists.

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Blumfeld, an Elderly Bachelor

Franz Kafka

(Concluded)

On his way to the clothing factory, where he is employed, thoughts of his work prevail over everything else. He hastens his step and, despite the delay the boy has caused him, he is the first to arrive at the office. This office is a room enclosed in glass; it contains a writing table for Blumfeld, and two reading desks for the assistants under him. Although these reading desks are as small and narrow as if they were meant for school children, it is still very crowded in the office, and the assistants are not allowed to sit down, because then there would no longer be any place for Blumfeld's chair. Certainly that is very inconvenient for them, but it also makes it more difficult for Blumfeld to watch them. Often they lean zealously over their desks, not, indeed, in order to work, but simply to whisper to one another or even to fall asleep. Blumfeld gets very annoyed with them, for they come nowhere near helping him enough in the enormous amount of work he is burdened with. This work consists in supervising the entire dealings in goods and money with the girls working at home, who are employed by the factory to produce the more delicate merchandise. To be able to judge the scope of this work one must have a closer insight into the whole situation. But since Blumfeld's predecessor has been dead for several years, no one any longer has such an insight; hence Blumfeld can not grant any one the right to pass judgment on his work. The manufacturer, Herr Ottomar, for instance, obviously underestimates Blumfeld's work; naturally he recognizes the credit Blumfeld has earned during his twenty years in the factory, and he recognizes it not only because he has to, but also because he esteems Blumfeld as a loyal and trustworthy person. Nevertheless, he does undervalue his work; that is, he thinks it can be organized more simply and hence, in every respect, more profitably than Blumfeld has done. They say—and it is not at all unlikely—that Ottomar shows himself so seldom in Blumfeld's department simply in order to spare himself being annoyed by the sight of Blumfeld's method of working. No doubt it is dismal for Blumfeld to be so misunderstood, but there is no help for it; for he can by no means force Ottomar to spend a month or so uninter-

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ruptedly in his division, to study the many different kinds of work to be mastered there, to apply his own supposedly better methods, and finally by the collapse of the department, which that would necessarily involve, to be convinced of Blumfeld's rightness. So Blumfeld goes about his work calmly as before. He is a little startled, however, when after a long time Ottomar finally appears. Out of a subordinate's sense of duty he makes a feeble attempt to explain to Ottomar this or that arrangement, while the latter, nodding silently and with lowered eyes, passes on by: for the rest, he suffers less from this indifference than from the thought that if he ever has to give up his position, the immediate consequence will be a huge confusion that no one will be able to disentangle, for he knows of no one in the factory who could replace him and take over his position without tying up the business for months with the severest congestion. Naturally, when the boss underrates someone, the employees take pleasure in outdoing him wherever possible. Hence everyone underrates Blumfeld's work. No one considers it necessary to work for a time in Blumfeld's division for his training, and when new employees are taken on, no one is assigned to him of his own accord. For this reason Blumfeld's department is lacking in recruits. When Blumfeld, who had hitherto managed everything all alone except for the help of one attendant, demanded the appointment of an assistant, there were weeks of the severest kind of struggling. Almost every day he appeared in Ottomar's office and explained quietly and in great detail why an assistant was necessary in his division. It is not simply that Blumfeld wants to spare himself; he does not want to spare himself; he does his much more than ample share of the work and doesn't propose to stop now. But Herr Ottomar should consider how the business has developed in the course of time, how all divisions have been expanded accordingly, and only Blumfeld's department always forgotten; and how it is precisely there that the work has increased! When Blumfeld first came to the factory—probably Herr Ottomar can no longer recall those times—they were dealing with a matter of some ten seamstresses; today their number varies from fifty to sixty. Such an achievement requires energy; as to that, Blumfeld can guarantee that he exhausts himself in his work completely, but only so as to master it completely; from now on, however, he can no longer guarantee anything. Herr Ottomar, of course, never refused Blumfeld's requests straight out; he could hardly do that when faced with an old employee; but the way he had of scarcely listening, of talking across him to other people right in the midst of Blumfeld's request, of making half-promises, and then in a few days of forgetting everything—this was downright insulting. Not, properly

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speaking, for Blumfeld; he is no visionary. Though respect and recognition be ever so fine, he can do without them. Despite everything, he will stick to his post till the end, so long as things somehow go on. In any case, he is in the right, and even though it sometimes takes a long time, the right must finally win out. So, in the end, Blumfeld actually received two assistants—and what assistants, indeed! One could almost believe that Ottomar had seen he could show his contempt for the department even more clearly by granting him assistants like these than by refusing to give him any at all. It was even possible that Ottomar had put Blumfeld off so long simply because he had been looking for two such assistants and—as was quite likely—had not been able to find them any earlier. Blumfeld could not complain now; one could foresee the answer: he had received two assistants when he had asked for only one. Ottomar managed everything so cleverly. To be sure, Blumfeld complained all the same, not because he still expected any help, but only because his needs absolutely drove him to it. He did not even complain explicitly, but simply by the way, when some passing opportunity presented itself. Nevertheless, the rumor soon spread among his spiteful colleagues that someone had asked Ottomar if it were possible that Blumfeld, who had just received such extraordinary aid, was still complaining. Thereupon Ottomar had supposedly answered yes, that Blumfeld was still complaining—but with justice. He, Ottomar, had finally looked into the matter and intended little by little to assign Blumfeld one assistant for every seamstress, hence about sixty altogether. And should these still not suffice, he would send him even more, and not call quits till the madhouse that had been developing in Blumfeld's department for years should be full. Now Ottomar's manner of speaking was well imitated in these remarks; but Blumfeld had no doubt that he himself would be far from talking about him in such a way. The whole thing was an invention of the dawdlers in the offices on the first floor. Blumfeld could have passed over it lightly had it not been for the presence of the assistants. But there they stood and were not to be budged. Pale, weak children. According to their papers they should already have been past school age, though in reality one could hardly believe it. Indeed, one would have hardly wanted to entrust them yet to a teacher, so plainly did they still belong at their mother's knee. They could not yet move about intelligently, and to stand for long made them uncommonly tired, especially during the first weeks. If one left them unwatched, they instantly collapsed in their weakness and stood leaning in a corner, all stooped over. Blumfeld tried to make them understand that they would cripple themselves for the rest of their lives if they always gave in so to their laziness. It was even risky to give the

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assistants a little errand to do. Once one of them had had to carry something just a couple of steps, and running along over-eagerly, had struck his knee against the desk. The room had been full of seamstresses and the desk piled high with goods, but Blumfeld had had to drop everything, lead the weeping assistant into his office, and make a little bandage for him. Even this eagerness, however, was only superficial. Like true children, they sometimes wanted to distinguish themselves; but much more often—or rather, almost always—they simply wanted to escape the attention of their superior and deceive him. Once during the height of the busy season Blumfeld, dripping with perspiration, had rushed by them, noticing, as he passed, how they were exchanging postage stamps, hidden between the bales of goods. He would have liked to beat them over the head with his fists; it would have been the only possible punishment for such behavior. But they were children, and Blumfeld could hardly go about killing children. So he continued to be tormented by them. Originally he had imagined that the assistants would help him in the direct distributions, which at the time of apportioning the goods requires so much effort and vigilance. He had thought he would stand behind his desk somewhere near the middle of things, overseeing everything and taking care of the entries, while the assistants would run back and forth at his orders making the distributions. He had thought that his supervision, which, sharp as it was, could hardly suffice for such a crowd, would be supplemented by the watchfulness of the assistants, who would gradually gain experience, and instead of having to be instructed in every detail, would finally themselves learn how to discriminate among the seamstresses as to their requirements and trustworthiness. Judged by these assistants, however, his hopes had been utterly vain. Blumfeld soon saw that he could not even let them talk to the seamstresses. From the very beginning they would not so much as go near some of the women because they had taken a dislike to them or were afraid of them; but others, to whom they were partial, they would run to the door to meet. They would bring them whatever they wanted and press it into their hands with a kind of secrecy, even though the seamstresses were entitled to it, and for these favorites would gather together in a box various snippings, worthless left-overs, as well as a few useful odds and ends, and then, already blissful, would beckon to them from a little distance behind Blumfeld's back and in return get bonbons popped into their mouths. To be sure, Blumfeld soon put an end to this disgraceful state of affairs, and whenever the seamstresses arrived, drove the assistants into the cubicle. For a long time they considered this a great injustice, and in defiance deliberately broke their

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pens and sometimes, without daring to raise their heads, would knock loudly on the glass panes so as to draw the attention of the seamstresses to what they felt was the wretched treatment they were receiving at Blumfeld's hands.

The injustices that they themselves commit they can not see. Thus, for instance, they almost always arrive at the office late. Blumfeld, their superior, who from his earliest youth has always taken it for granted that one should appear at least a half hour before the office opens—neither ambition nor exaggerated conscientiousness makes him feel this way, but simply a certain sense of propriety—Blumfeld has usually to wait for them more than an hour. Chewing his breakfast roll, he stands ordinarily behind the desk in the outer office, closing the accounts in the little books of the seamstresses. Before long he loses himself in his work and thinks of nothing else. Then suddenly he is so startled that the pen in his hand continues to tremble for some time after. One of the assistants rushes in as though about to collapse; with one hand he supports himself against something and with the other clutches at his heaving breast—but the whole show means nothing more than that he is offering an excuse for being late, which is so silly that Blumfeld purposely lets it pass, for if he did not, he would have to thrash the boy according to his deserts. So instead, he simply looks at him for a moment, then points with outstretched arm to the cubicle and turns back again to his work. Now one might expect that the assistant would see his superior's kindness and hurry to his post. But no, he does not hurry; he frisks along, going on tip-toe, first one foot and then the other. Is he laughing at his superior? Not even that. It is simply another case of that mixture of fear and smugness, against which one is so defenseless. How else explain the fact that today, when Blumfeld himself arrived unusually late at the office, it is only after a long wait—he is in no mood for checking over the books—that he now at last catches sight of the two assistants strolling down the street. Through the clouds of dust that the stupid attendant is driving before him with his broom, he notices how contentedly they come along. With their arms around each other's necks they appear to be telling one another important things, which at best probably have some illicit connection with the business. The nearer they come to the glass door, the slower they move. Finally, one of them even takes hold of the latch, but he does not press it down; instead, they go on talking and laughing. "Come, open up for our fine gentlemen," shouts Blumfeld, with a gesture to the attendant. But when the assistants enter, he no longer feels like quarreling, ignores their greetings, and goes back to his desk. He commences to

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reckon the accounts, looking up from time to time to see what the assistants are doing. One seems to be very tired and keeps rubbing his eyes. After hanging his overcoat on the hook, he takes the opportunity to remain leaning up against the wall for a while. He was lively enough on the street, but the proximity of work makes him feel tired. The other assistant, on the contrary, is altogether too much in the mood to work. It has always been his desire to be allowed to sweep up. But that is a task that does not belong to him; sweeping up is for the attendant alone. In and of itself, Blumfeld has nothing against the assistant doing it. One can not imagine him sweeping up any more inefficiently than the attendant. But if he wants to do it, he should come so much the earlier to work, before the attendant begins sweeping, and should not use his time for that when he should be exclusively engaged in the office work. Now if the boy proves stubborn in the face of all reasonable arguments, the attendant—this half-blind old man whom the boss would certainly not stand for in any department but Blumfeld's and who goes on living only by God's and the boss's grace—this attendant, at least, might be yielding enough to surrender the broom for a moment to the boy, who is so clumsy, though, that he would at once lose all interest in sweeping and go running after the attendant with the broom to get him to go back again to his work. At the moment, however, the attendant seems to feel especially responsible for this sweeping up. One can see how, no sooner than the boy approaches him, he tries to get a firmer grip on the broom with his trembling hands; he stands stock still, leaving off his sweeping the better to be able to turn all his attention to keeping possession of the broom. The assistant can not plead with him in words, for he is afraid of Blumfeld, who is apparently reckoning accounts; then, too, ordinary words would be useless, for the attendant can hear only the loudest shouting. So the assistant first plucks at his sleeve. The attendant, knowing, of course, what is wanted of him, looks at the assistant sullenly, shakes his head and clutches the broom closer to his breast. The assistant now clasps his hands and pleads with him. To be sure, he does not expect there is anything to be gained by pleading; he does it simply because begging gives him pleasure. The other assistant accompanies these proceedings with low laughter, obviously thinking—unlikely as it is—that Blumfeld does not hear him. All this pleading makes not the slightest impression on the attendant; he turns around, thinking that now he will surely be able to go back to using his broom. But the assistant follows him, dancing about on tip-toe and wringing his hands imploringly, and now beseeches him from the other side. This turning about of the attendant and prancing after of the assistant is repeated several times. Finally the attendant feels himself cut off on every side, and no-

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tices what, with only a little less simplicity, he could have seen at the very beginning—that he will be worn out sooner than the assistant. So looking for outside help, he threatens the assistant by pointing at Blumfeld, with whom he will lodge a complaint if the assistant does not leave off at once. The assistant, realizing he will have to hurry if he wants to get the broom at all, snatches at it impudently. An involuntary outcry from the other assistant marks the approaching crisis. The attendant, to be sure, rescues the broom this time by stepping backwards and snatching it with him. But now the assistant will no longer give way; with mouth open and eyes flashing he leaps forward; the attendant tries to flee, but his old legs, instead of running, simply knock together. The assistant wrenches at the broom, and though he still fails to get it, at least succeeds in knocking it to the floor where it is lost to the attendant. And to the assistants as well, it would seem, for at the falling of the broom all three—the assistants and the attendant —are at first frozen with fright, for now everything will be perfectly plain to Blumfeld. In fact, Blumfeld is looking up through his wicket as if he had just now become aware of something amiss. Sternly and searchingly he fixes each one with his eye; not even the broom on the floor escapes him. Whether because the silence lasts too long or because the guilty assistant can not suppress his desire to sweep, at all events, the assistant stoops down, very cautiously of course, the way one reaches after an animal rather than a broom, takes it in his hand and starts trailing it over the floor, but immediately throws it away in terror when Blumfeld leaps to his feet and steps out of the cubicle. "Back to your work, both of you, and not another word!" shouts Blumfeld, pointing with outstretched arm the way to their desks. They obey instantly, but not at all ashamed and with lowered heads; on the contrary, they pass by Blumfeld stiffly, looking him straight in the eye, as though they would thereby keep him from striking them. They should have at least learned enough from experience to know that Blumfeld on principle never strikes anyone. But they are over-fearful, and keep striving, without any delicacy of feeling, to protect their real or apparent rights.

(Translated by Philip Horton)

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Paris Letter

Having its birth postponed for nearly a month by the luxuriously mounted war-scare of late September did Paris's autumn season no sort of good: it has proved to be a rickety child, timid, cranky, and ready at the least alarm to give up the ghost entirely. The galleries will still plan no more than one show in advance; publishers' lists are, to put it politely, not exactly world-shaking; and as for really striking novelties on the concert-programmes, they can practically be counted on the fingers of one thumb.

The reason is not far to seek. A spectre is haunting France—not, alas, the spectre of Communism, but that of internal fascism and external war. And he must have superb soundproofing on his ivory tower who can quietly and whole-heartedly continue the weaving of sestinas on love and landscape amid the *tohu-bohu* of political argument and symptomatic event. No, when writers talk together, the subjects are neither technique nor the Prix Goncourt nor semantics, but the impact of Munich on the intellectuals, the growth of the FIARI [See Manifesto printed in the last issue of PARTISAN REVIEW—*Editors*], or the timing of the coming Ukraine grab. Discussions about the radio, for example, tend to concern less the artistic quality of its programmes than the severe censorship which, without even a pretense of legality, the Daladier government imposed on November 30 during the general strike and has not yet lifted. With the artistic and cultural world haunted by the grimmest of political preoccupations, the arts are practised with a visibly distrait air; and purely cultural conversation, languid and pallid, has a way of tapering off into broody silences. To a pedestrian meditating on say the new establishment in France of concentration-camps for "undesirable foreigners," the sight of the Greco-vegetarian figure of Raymond Duncan, suddenly sandal-flapping from his preposterous "Akademia" in the rue de Seine, seems literally a sheer hallucination.

Symptomatic is the change in editorial content of the weekly *Beaux-Arts*. This paper, previously more concerned with information than with either art-criticism or politics, and not of any marked character, suddenly at the beginning of October launched a spectacular campaign for a "truly national French art," with contemptibly chauvinistic pyrotechnics (signed and otherwise) by Jean Cassou, bolstered with a series of supposedly patriotic quotations from the French "great." This pompous plumping for academicism (for of course it turns out that by a "truly national" art the *pompiers* of *Beaux-Arts* mean an art purified of the alien influences of cubism, surrealism, abstractionism, and everything else of interest that has occurred since impressionism) would be merely risible did it not remind one uncomfortably of immediately pre-Nazi Germany. For politically conscious artists are already sufficiently distressed by the conviction that Daladier bears a more sinister resemblance to one Heinrich Brüning than to the Napoleon Bonaparte he

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apparently fancies himself to be, without having a quiet art-weekly suddenly burst into reactionary howls against artistic progress which are unnervingly reminiscent of that Anti-"Kultur-Bolschewismus" movement which, similarly born in 1932 Berlin, grew like a rank weed till, with Hitler's accession to power, it finally succeeded in entirely strangling German culture.

And, just as in pre-Nazi Berlin, the practical manifestations of this reaction display that puritanism which seems an inevitable parallel of racism (also increasingly rampant in pre-Fascist France). The *Vingtieme Siecle* reports in its Christmas issue that "a well-bred person (such as Huysmans would have called a 'disconcerting stinker')" made such a scandalous scene in front of a Montparnasse bookshop window in which the magazine's previous issue was displayed open at a page showing a detail of a Maillol nude, that a mob formed, requiring the police to disperse it. It is not many weeks since some budding fascist covered Rodin's "Age d'Arain" with a shirt; and the latest report from Pere Lachaise Cemetery is that, sure enough, some racial puritan has repeated the castration of the figure on the Epstein tomb of Oscar Wilde.

If it is not fascist laymen but fascist artists who are behind these juvenilely preposterous yet dangerously symptomatic manifestations, they might do well to consult the painter Corrado Cagli, who has recently arrived in Paris, a refugee from Italy. Cagli, who chose fascism, and was from 1933 to 1937 its white-haired boy (he was the official painter of the Italian pavillion at the 1937 Paris Exposition), found that his espousal of the gangster cause did not protect him from the consequences of having a non-Aryan grandmother. Or they might consult a recent number of *Beaux-Arts* itself, wherein, side-by-side with articles defending French art from everything that has made it world-famous in the last three decades, is an item reporting the complete ousting of the quite Aryan Futurist Marinetti from all his Italian sinecures because Mussolini demands that Italy "return to her classic heritage." DeChirico, already pretty well *raté* as an artist, will presumably soon receive a similar blow.

Yet though the cultural world here is haunted by the jittery feeling that somebody or something called war or fascism is constantly looking over its shoulder when it works, it has not yet to any considerable extent drawn the correct conclusions from the bankruptcy of the Stalino-Litvinov policy exemplified internationally by Anschluss, Munich, and the coming Ukrainian blackmail; and more particularly in France by Bonnet's December 14th statement before the Parliamentary Commission on Foreign Affairs that the Franco-Soviet Pact was fully operative *except* in the event of an autonomy movement in the Russian Ukraine; by the bringing to open trial of the General deMiller kidnapping case—after years of letting the G.P.U. have carte blanche in France (e.g., the theft of Trotsky's archives, the assassinations of Reiss and Klément, and the mysterious death of Léon Sedov)—which last week resulted in the inevitable jury-verdict that it was a G.P.U. job; and, three days ago, by the suppression of the *Journal de Moscou.*

Romain Rolland, for example, whose war-crisis break with Stalinism roused long-range hopes in this correspondent, backslid, once the war crisis was past, *faute de mieux,* into the columns of *L'Humanité,* wherein, however much distrusted now by the internally quarreling Stalinist Politburo, he yet continues to write an occasional vague and puzzled appeal for human-

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itarianism and unity. And if, on the one hand, of the two former leaders of the Stalinist professors, MM. Baby and Husson, the first has been expelled and the second has resigned, on the other there is formed a new organization, *L'Union des Intellectuels Franctis,* under the aegis of the Stalinists and some of the anti-Daladier Radical-Socialists, to "restore French honor after the Diktat of Munich" or something. Actually, however, such an organization is about on a par with the other Stalinist "Lithuanian Singing-Societies for Peace and Democracy" and "Vegetarian Sun-Lovers' Fronts against War and Fascism" with which credentials committees in any cultural united front in England or the States have had long and amused familiarity. The simple fact is that the French educational and professional world, completely uncertain *what* to do to stop fascism abroad without falling into it at home, is keeping very quiet and doing very little.

Though it is not possible to report any more spectacular breakings-away of outstanding figures from the flesh- (or rather ink-) pots of literary Stalinism, the *Fédération Internationale de l'Art Indépendant Révolutionnaire* records a steady and gratifying growth, with, at present writing, no schisms—rare indeed in a country where literary movements live usually an amoeba-like life of perpetual self-divisions and fusions, unamoeba-like enough, however, in the violence of diatribe which usually attends them. To offset the strictures in the last "Paris Letter" regarding André Breton's sectarianism in injecting into his initial manifesto a spot of *réclame* for the *surréaliste* tenet of psychoanalysis, it is only just to report his principled, firm, and courageous stand toward a little *chantage* on the part of those English *surréalistes* who were loath to leave the cozy ambience of *surréaliste* success and Popular-Front high-life for the cold exterior world of revolutionary art (which, by the way, *surréalisme* itself had been in the years before they got in on its later glory). A letter to these hesitants from the main *Surréaliste* Group in Paris concludes (the thought is Breton's, though the words another's):

> ". . . Nous ne sommes pas dupes des mots et des étiquettes, pas plus de l'étiquette 'surréaliste' que des étiquettes 'communiste' ou 'URSS'.
>
> "Bien entendu, il ne s'agit pas davantage de nous opposer aux conquetes révolutionnaires du prolétariat russe que de nous opposer aux conquetes dans le domaine de l'Art de nos camarades de Londres.
>
> "Il s'agit pour nous de continuer a mener un mouvement révolutionnaire *sur tous les plans,* et s'il le faut, malgré un parti communiste ou un groupe surréaliste.
>
> *"Contre eux-memes si cela est nécessaire."*

The last sentence merits attention. For the founder and chief of *surréalisme* to be willing if necessary to break it up just at the moment when its exhibitions are a *succes-fou* and it is beginning to win important financial support is, in the opinion of this writer, an action which deserves signalization.

Just out is the first number of *Clé,* the FIARI's monthly bulletin. Opening with a striking manifesto, "Pas de Patrie!" (in defense of that freedom of asylum which has been one of the principal causes of France's hegemony in so many arts, against the new decree-laws of Daladier and Reynaud, with their savage measures against political refugees), followed by articles on politico-artistic subjects by Jean Giono, Georges Henein, Maurice Heine,

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André Breton, Albert Paraz, Henri Pastoureau, and Benjamin Péret, together with a translated section of Ignazio Silone's *School for Dictators,* a revealing selection of citations from letters replying to the original Rivera-Breton manifesto (see the Fall number of PARTISAN REVIEW), of qualified refusal from such as Roger Martin du Gard, Gaston Bachelard, Paul Rivet, Michel Leiris, Robert Ganzo, and Jean Painlevé, of adhesion from such as Jef Last, Francis Vian, Molins, Herbert Read, Victor Serge, André Marchand, Paul Benichous, and J. F. Chabrun—and the usual rubrics of books, theatre, and cinema, plus several other manifestos—*Clé* packs into its eight *Nation*-size small-type pages a surprising amount of thought and information, the impact of whose delivery can hardly fail to have repercussions.

The purely politically minded might cavil somewhat at a violence of language, a personality of invective, that smack a trifle of literary ultra-leftism; but those who have been nauseated by the dead-level Stalinization of French liberals, the careerist degeneration of such once brilliant writers as Aragon, and the general sickliness of the whole politico-artistic situation in France, will perhaps understand and sympathize with the desire of *Clé's* directors to have its opening blast utterly unequivocal and violently purificative.

To realize that some such organization as the FIARI is badly needed in France to provide a rallying-point for avant-garde artists and intellectuals who have a genuine belief in the necessity and relative immediacy of revolution, one need only compare FIARI's position with that taken by the literary stooges of the official "revolutionary" party: certainly characteristic and revelatory is *La Conspiration,* the new book by Paul Nizan, a Communist Party functionary and editor of the international-news page in that party's "non-political" daily, *Ce Soir*—a book which provides the "Communist" quotation of the season: "Revolution is all very well, but it's just pure romanticism." After this, it will not surprise that *La Conspiration* was awarded the Prix Inter-Allié.

The other literary prizes, just announced, went as might be expected to the undistinguished authors of undistinguished books: the Goncourt to White-Russian refugee Henri Troyat's *L'Araigne;* the Femina-Vie Heureuse to Felix de Chazournes's "sweet" *Caroline;* the Renaudot to *Paris-Soir* Literary Columnist Pierre-Jean Launay's *Léonie la Bienheureuse.* All of which makes as little difference in the interstellar spaces as do the U.S. Pulitzers; but produces just as much log-rolling, publishers'-ad excitement, and newspaper publicity. The choices are, one supposes, news; in any case they will surely provide interesting documentation to post-revolutionary cultural historians.

The entire Paris concert scene has been much modified by the extensive and continuing influx of German, largely Jewish, refugees. Their Germanic tendency to turn concert-halls into temples wherein the faithful, burying their faces in their hands, breathe deeply in rhythm, has irritated the French, who like to listen to music with their eyes open and their pores shut, into exasperated wriggling and programme-rattling.. Less frivolously, this migration has produced an interesting rivalry between the German conductors Furtwängler and Scherchen. Furtwängler, a sort of ambassador of German music, and about the last top-flight conductor the Nazis have left, gave at the Salle Pleyel, with seats running up to 150 francs, a series of classicized

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performances of the thumpingest official German music: largely Beethoven, Strauss, Brahms, etc., with a super-slick rendition of Debussy's *La Mer,* etc. to show no hard feelings—which, for those who like Toscanini-ism, was presumably enjoyable. Meanwhile the semi-refugee Herman Scherchen was offering at the Salle Gaveau, with highest priced seats at 40 francs, the most remarkable programmes of Lully, Mozart, Bach, and particularly Purcell.

The more light-minded derived immense amusement from the way the concerts were used by the musical public to "show the winning colors"—the Furtwängler series being ostentatiously attended by all ranking duchesses and the fancier fascists, firmly determined to enjoy it if it killed them; the Scherchen series similarly rallying a belligerently liberal musical united front. The more serious-minded, noting that the liberals had far the best of it programmatically, drew interesting conclusions concerning the effects of political coloration on the broadness of programme selection.

As for the Paris theatre, the less said the better. The big success of the season is Jean Cocteau's *Les Parents Terribles,* slickly cast and tastily performed at the city-owned privately-leased Ambassadeurs in the Champs Elysees. And a fine piece of cheese it is, which would be perfect for Broadway did it not depend for its enjoyment upon a detailed knowledge of the mores and shenannigans of the French bourgeoisie. Like his earlier boob-thumper, *La Voix Humaine,* the present piece is obviously a bid for that long-overdue Academy fauteuil. But his case has not been helped by the recent scandal in which the City of Paris (egged on by the jealousy of big success-specialist Bernstein?) has canceled the theatre lease in disapproval of Cocteau's having given free tickets to school-children, the town fathers not deeming the play (a tasty little tidbit full of incestuous overtones, a son cuckolding his father with the latter's mistress, a fairly murderous maiden aunt, and other charming concomitants of bourgeois domestic life) the best-chosen pabulum for the youthful mind. While not agreeing on the "moral" basis, the present writer is quite in accord aesthetically with the ancients' opinion. Cocteau contra: his theatre-manager has instituted a five-million-franc damage suit against the City. M. Cocteau's other recent contribution to French culture was a blow-by-blow radio broadcast of the midnight mass and other Christmas ceremonies from the mountain commune of Saint-Véran in Queyras. How this new art-form sounded, your correspondent finds himself unable to report at first hand: perhaps he will be excused for having passed up its enjoyment in favor of sharing a bottle of bad *reveillon* champagne with the *copains.*

For there will not be much more time for *reveilloning.* France rides hell-bent for fascism and war; before next *Reveillon,* certainly Europe and probably France will have passed through hours too sombre and sanguinary to leave one much heart for seasonal gayeties.

Paris SEAN NIALL
Christmas Day
1 9 3 8

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Books

NINE POETS

R. P. Blackmur

Nine books of contemporary verse running to over thirteen hundred pages leave one both aghast and agape. It is education by shock; the lesson, even after reflection, confusing, and the value dubious. Not for one's life would one repeat what one thought one had learned. Far better, mouth open and teeth showing, a conspirator caught, to stop at the shock. Let us see why.

Mr. Belitt says it is because you must try to integrate yourself, make of your senses a single faculty and "loose the inward wound to bleed afresh." But his labour at integration ends, in 1938, rather more like vertigo:

> *Tranced as in surmise, lost between myth and mood,*
> *Derelict, decoyed,*
> *In some astonished dream of sailing. . . .*

Dereliction is an important element in Mr. Belitt's sensibility; it is a function of sleep and dreaming, of a bird and of human stragglers: at any rate we have derelict claws of a singing bird and certain inexplicit stragglers by the surge. One should not make too much a point of it, yet it strikes sharp; that Mr. Belitt's poetry fails of integrity less because it deals with the sentiment of chaos and the moral of the abyss than because, in so dealing, he prefers the dreamy, the quite somnambulistic state to the waking representation. This is to indulge in the dereliction—the reprehensible abandonment—of poetic duty. He does not say—he does not represent—what he is writing about; he only indicates, and forsakes, what it was that led him to write.

Otherwise he does very well; his words work on each other and carry each other along apace; it is a pleasure, as sleep-walking goes, and at the right remove, to reach his version of vertigo. With the work of Laura Riding we have no such contact, no matter at what remove. Her poems may,

The Complete Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams. 1906—1938. New Directions. $3; *Mirrors of Venus. A Novel in Sonnets. 1914—1938,* by John Wheelwright. Bruce Humphries. $2.50; *A Glad Day.* Poems by Kay Boyle. New Directions. $2; *Dead Reckoning.* By Kenneth Fearing. Random House. $1.25; *Letter to a Comrade.* By Joy Davidman. Yale University Press. $2; *The Garden of Disorder.* By Charles Henri Ford. New Directions. $2; *The Five-fold Mesh.* By Ben Belitt. Knopf. $2; *Sequence on Violence.* By Harry Roskolenko. Signal Publishers. $1.50; *The Collected Poems of Laura Riding.* Random House. $4.

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as she says in a long preface, be written for all the right reasons, or for more right reasons than anybody else's poetry, and her reasons may be mine as well as hers, and that these reasons are all the reasons of poetry, but I suspect just the same and with good reason that the reason of all these reasons is the reason (buz buz) she does not say once and for all Unreason, and then add, for all the best unreasons that unreason is not not-unreason. Perhaps she really does not not say so. Certainly she does not not say every now and then unreproach unharshed unloving unsmooth unlove undeath unlife undazzle unmade unthought unlive unrebellion unbeautifuls unzoölogical unstrange unwild unprecious unbull unhurriedness unenthusiasm. Miss Riding is the not star of un no not never nowhere. After page eighty pretty well right through 477 pages she tells us what she it they we you are not, and when she does not tell us directly she tells us even more not clearly by not not indirection. Many pages are not without fifteen forms of the verbal negative; no page is without words which produce negation. We have either

There is much that we are not.
There is much that is not.
There is much that we have not to be

or we have such phrases as "native strangeness . . . Science, the white heart of strangers . . . the lionish landscape of advent." Here meanings beat against each other like nothing but words; we have verbalism in extremis; an end-product of abstraction without any trace of what it was abstracted *from*. Automatic writing as featured by Gertrude Stein plus an obsession with the *problem* (not the experience) of identity plus an extraordinary instinct of how best to let words obfuscate themselves here combine in the most irresponsible body of poetry in our time. Miss Riding is not derelict; she is jetsam: washed up; and just to the level that *we* are washed up she makes excellent reading.

Mr. Kenneth Fearing's *Dead Reckoning* is not nearly as good reading; for one thing a good deal of it is in capital letters which are very hard to hear they are so loud and not at all foxey and feminine like italics and for another thing much of it is in very long lines—some of the lines are several lines long—with no pegs to hold them up, so it is hard not to hurry to the end before they fall down or worse fall apart as indeed they often do both —down and apart, like the genealogies in the Bible and the catalogues in Whitman, and like what Mr. Fearing is writing about: the defeated people who live in cities and the present world generally and who want what is not to be had either in cities or the present world and want it very much almost exactly because they do not know what it is. We all of us have caught ourselves talking and sounding like Mr. Fearing's people showing what we are and what we want and hastily covering up the gap between. Mr. Fearing just says what it is like; his work is an example of Henry James' phrase: the platitude of mere statement: disturbing, apt, accurate; but in the end, no soap. Meanwhile, though one would rather read any poem by Fearing than any poem by Riding because he not only says what he is writing about but sticks to it, let us insist that there are certain obligations in the profession of poetry which if fulfilled leave the reader, not just in the same boat with the poet, but deeply in his debt. If Mr. Fearing wants

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to limit himself to the poetry of statements on the Whitmanesque line he will have to use that line for all it is worth;especially for phrasing and the control of speed such as are usually obtained by metre and rhyme; and further, and much more difficult, he will have to charge his lines so persuasively with his subject that every line will "tell" just in itself as well as in its major relations. In metrical poetry the filling may well be the binding agent between the parts and inseparable from them; in non-metrical poetry the only bond is gravity and balance, what is only filling drops out.

Miss Boyle in *A Glad Day* gets round that difficulty more or less in passing, partly because she resorts largely to prose phrasing to keep her work moving, partly because her filling is indistinguishable at a given instant from her building material, and partly because she is apparently interested in using only the least amount of the vast possibilities her work declares. All that she does is penetrating, discriminating, devastating and decorative. She knows all about meanings without ever seeming to have experienced what is meant. This is the end of "In Defense of Homosexuality":

> *Put under glass some of them could be worn as cameos*
> *Their femininity plumbed to the depths of*
> *A tedious vocation as engrossing as bee-raising*
> *And as monotonous to the outsider.*

Her value lies everywhere, as in these lines, in the display of specialised and truncated perceptions: perceptions both so intelligent and so little tied to their locus that they can be used like postage stamps on anybody's mail; a feature which is perhaps representative of that general dissociative frame of intelligence called surrealism, or the addiction to superimposed units of perception, superimposed but nowhere joined. Unlike Mr. Fearing she has nothing to learn because there is nothing in the world supplied by learning that she wants to do. Your sophisticate is only swamped by learning, cramped by form.

The outside of Mr. Ford's *Garden of Disorder* belongs to much the same school, the stretch of overt sonnets in the midreach of the garden doing nothing to belie the borders. The title poem is dedicated to Pavel Tchelitchew; hence one expects, and indeed is given, a flair for the commonplace seen as gusty because slightly twisted and distrait; one is both amused and brought to the edge of discovery—where one is vaguely, and archly, taken aback:—

> *When you were in the circus did the seals lie on their backs,*
> *piss straight up like hallelujah?*

The archness makes it fun, and because it is fun it does not mean or need to be actual, and because it is not actual it must be taken either as not counting or as an escape from what does count. This is a splendid method, this verbalised nexus of the arch look and the thing seen, of voiding poetic responsibility at the moment that you feel it—splendid and fascinating, a very vice. In the poem called "Plaint before a Mob of 10,000 at Owensboro, Ky.", which is quite the best poem in the book, Mr. Ford writes six magnificently direct lines which are all of his poem but its end; then he adds seven lines of arch filling which obfuscate precisely as they dictate the distich of ending. Let us compare two direct lines,

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I, Rainey Betha, 22,
from the top-branch of race-hatred look at you

with two lines of filling—

The robins of my eyes hover where
sixteen leaves fall that were a prayer.

The dignity and justness of the first metaphor are only reduced by the metaphorical (not the verbal) distortion of the personification. Perhaps it is the rhyme or it may be the sentiment that wreaks the injury; certainly there is corruption at work in the language, not the corruption from which we spring, but that in which we end, a corruption from which the archness of flavor is no redemption. The lines are simply offside, representing material out of control. When the robin eyes begin to hover the attention is distracted; it is the distraction, the specious haven, of irrelevance so often resorted to by the wavering intelligence, the selfish spirit, the vain craftsman before the invoked face of reality. That the resort is made as we say unconsciously—merely because in this nexus the poet thought of something or something suggested itself to put in—does not diminish the dereliction. The principle involved is practical and has a direct effect upon the degree of appreciation the poet can expect from his reader, namely: you cannot successfully write a short poem in either different modes of language or different modes of feeling unless you make sure that the different modes work together to a common advantage. Put the other way round, unity of tone is the best assurance of the effect of composition. Put generally: only within an order can you give disorder room. All of our poets so far have rather attempted to get along on vestiges of order in composition as in life, and are all examples of what Yvor Winters calls the fallacy of expressive form. The practical result is that as the poet does not keep to his subject and make it objectively complete neither does the reader keep to the poem.

Mr. Roskolenko, in his *Sequence on Violence,* has not yet, I think, begun to write poetry; he is rather a vast fascinating register of the mind as sensorium in which at any moment anything may occur. He has all the irresponsible vitality of the immediate in sensation and of the frantic in perception; all governed, as is usually the case, only by vitiated convention, which is to say not governed at all. That is, the rich material of sensation is not used to enliven convention; rather we have sensation and convention with very little connection between them. On one level—that of the poems dealing with the politico-economical predicament—we see fresh sensation resolved into the convention of blanket anti-fascist terminology; on another level—that of the poems of personal revolt—we see it in the conventional negation of such final binding lines as those that end the last poem in the book:

Love is only gall
thus love offends us all.

But the lapse into vitiated convention shows most clearly, perhaps, on another level altogether—on the pervasive level where the detail of sensation or perception is supposed to acquire meaning or movement by jointure with the conventional word.

You have seen waves *and* rockets—*gerrymander*
the sightless shafts of air. . . .

The italics are Mr. Roskolenko's; the word here in question is gerrymander.

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In another poem we find "the spirit dismembered with elan," where the important word is elan. No stretch either of word or context in either poem will bring these words into definable vital (or organic) relation with the meanings wanted. They are so used as to be deprived of their ordinary cumuli of meaning without acquiring the authority of a new or special meaning. When you find this type of writing expanded so as to be the only circulating element in long and obviously serious poems, you will conclude that the writer was not only not in possession of his subject but that he gave in only to its most obvious temptations: of verbal vanity—the fluxion of words without knowledge or assumption of the dictionary.

Poetry is to be regarded as the use of one vocabulary of the language. I have heard a medical man high in his profession assert that all medicine lay in an up-to-date medical dictionary; by which he meant that if he knew his vocabulary he could objectify his knowledge. It is the same thing with poetry, and with as much responsibility for life and death.

Of Miss Davidman's *Letter to a Comrade* there is less to say than of any of the books on our list. She is more evenly a poet than any but the two we have not yet mentioned; she has respect for the language, for the traditions of poetry, and for her own intelligence; she is forthright and what is more important she is candid. For the most part she writes with authority because she mostly limits herself either to what she knows or knows that she wants to know. She resorts neither to dogmas nor to any of the devices for stilling the consciousness, and succumbs only to those blueprint symbols and spirit natural to a growing mind affected by the megalopolitan culture of this decade. The spirit which conceives and the intellect which articulates the predominant element of protest in her poems are not entirely hers, not digested, not matured, but are a non-incorporated framework borrowed perhaps from the land of the *New Masses* where the best of these poems previously appeared. She has, that is, permitted her sensibility to be violated by the ideas which have attracted her. This is because the technique of her verse is not yet strong enough or plastic enough to cope alone with the material her sensibility has absorbed, and takes meanwhile any help it can get. There is nothing surprising in this; the very forms of our education, and the very formlessness of our taste, seem fairly designed to set us in immaturity by preventing us, so to speak, from the maturity we had only to assent to to inherit. Miss Davidman gives as her greatest promise that she has within her the ability to make that assent.

With Mr. Wheelwright's *Mirrors of Venus* and Dr. Williams' *Collected Poems* we come upon one man who insists upon his inheritance and attempts to make the most of it, and another man who, looking at the botch of the half-inherited, denies that there is anything to inherit. The difference is clear. In Mr. Wheelwright you get the sense of perceptions powerfully backed, fed, and formed; shaped otherwhere, celebrated here; a pattern not repeated but rediscovered. In Dr. Williams at his best you get perceptions powerful beyond the possibility of backing; the quotidian burgeoning without trace of yesterday; the commonplace made unique because violently felt. Dr. Williams of course inherits more than he thinks and Mr. Wheelwright not unnaturally suffers from what he inherits. The *Mirrors of Venus* lack richness, the *Collected Poems* lack culmination. Dr. Williams is full of tags

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that he knows nothing about; Mr. Wheelwright knows too much about his tags and by over-deliberation occasionally uncovers a void. Mr. Wheelwright moves towards the kinky, the special, the wilful, the sport of thought and spirit and form because he is so much aware of the general; Dr. Williams moves towards the flatness of the general because he takes every object, uninspected, as fresh. Mr. Wheelwright deals with moral and spiritual struggle; Dr. Williams deals with the same struggle before it has reached the level of morals and touches on the spirit only by accident. Mr. Wheelwright reaches the explicit through abstraction, by celebrating the fulfillment of pattern:

Habit is evil,—all habit, even speech
and promises prefigure their own breach.

Dr. Williams reaches the implicit through the concrete, by acknowledging what he sees:

It's a strange courage
you give me ancient star:

Shine alone in the sunrise
toward which you lend no part!

There are facts about these two poets which implement our respect for their poetry and put iron in the bias of our general regard for them as figures in the world of our present sensibility. The facts have nothing to do with magnitude, which is a gift of heaven, and of which our appreciation depends as much on distance as on use. We are concerned here merely with the facts of poetic character. There is, to begin with, the fact that Dr. Williams writes exclusively in free verse of an extraordinarily solid and flexible species. Further he despises traditional English metres; the sonnet he thinks good only for doggerel, subverts most intelligences, and has, as a word, a definitely fascistic meaning. I do not doubt that he may be right for himself; which goes to show only that his intellect is in him so badly proportioned that it interferes with the operation of his sensibility. He needs to work, as it were, under cover; needs to find his work seemingly already done for him when he takes it up. The depth and rightness of his instinct for himself is shown by the mastery in at least twenty poems of varying length of a form adequate in every respect to his poetic purpose. Yvor Winters says that this is the form of free verse, and that it scans, has outer rules and in inner scheme. I refer the reader to Winters' *Primitivism and Decadence* where the technique of Dr. Williams' free verse is fully discussed; I cannot follow the discussion myself, preferring to believe (until I can follow it) that Dr. Williams' astonishing success comes from the combination of a good ear for speech cadence and for the balance of meaning and sound, plus a facility for the double effect of weight and speed. When Mr. Winters (in the *Kenyon Review,* January 1939) compares Dr. Williams to Herrick as equally indestructible, the justice of his comparison, if there be any, must lie in the comparison of incongruities; for the older poet spent his life refining his sensibility in terms of his medium, precisely as the younger has evidently insisted on his sensibility at the *expense* of his medium.

However that may be, what remains of Dr. Williams' medium has been so successful for himself, that many have thought it would be successful for anybody. We are accustomed to think of him as a fertile poet—as fruitful in poems for other poets to read. The pages of the poetry journals every

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now and then show the results; curiously, the imitation is almost always of the poorer or more crotchety poems. The fact is, it seems to me, that Dr. Williams is a product of fertility. All the signs and recognitions of fertility in his work point backward. He is almost a reduction not a product, a reduction to a highly personalised style to express personal matters—a remarkable, but sterile, sport. You can imitate him, as you can imitate anything; but you cannot incorporate him. In short, his work adds to the sentiments but not to the sensibility.

One reason is that almost everything in Dr. Williams' poetry, including the rendering, is unexpanded notation. He isolates and calls attention to what we are already presently in possession of. Observation of which any good novelist must be constantly capable, here makes a solo appearance: the advantage is the strength of isolation as an attention-caller to the terrible persistence of the obvious, the unrelenting significance of the banal. Dr. Williams perhaps tries to write as the average man—that man who even less than the normal man hardly exists but is immanent. The conviction which attaches to such fine poems as "The Widow's Lament in Springtime," "Youth and Beauty," or the first section of "Spring and All," perhaps has its source, its rationale, in our instinctive willingness to find ourselves immamently average; just as, perhaps, the conviction attaching to tragic poetry is connected with our fascinated dread of seeing ourselves as normal. Dr. Williams has no perception of the normal; no perspective, no finality—for these involve, for imaginative expression, both the intellect which he distrusts and the imposed form which he cannot understand. What he does provide is a constant freshness and purity of language which infects with its own qualities an otherwise gratuitous exhibition of the sense and sentiment of humanity run-down—averaged—without a trace of significance or a vestige of fate in the fresh familiar face.

The facts about Mr. Wheelwright are very much on the level of significance and fate; they make the matter of his preoccupation; and as they are delivered or aborted they make the failure or the success of his poems. The subject is the significance of friendship and the fate of friends: "the mirror of Venus reflects loved ones as each would be seen." The emphasis—the feeling for pattern—is protestant-christian; divine but apprehended by the individual. The form is that of the sonnet, varied, twisted, transformed, restored: some inverted, some in couplets, some Shakespearean, some in free-verse, some in blank-verse; for Mr. Wheelwright feels that a sequence of "perfect" sonnets would produce hypnosis in the reader instead of demanding and controlling full attention. That may be so; but I observe that all the nine sonnets that seem to me almost wholly successful depart least from one or other of the stricter sonnet forms, and that those which seem to me to abort their subject-matter are in free or metrically unequal verse. (Those which seem to me successful—nine out of thirty-five—are "Abel," "Sanct," "Father," "Holy Saturday," "Lens," "Plus," "Phallus," "Mirror," and "Keeper." The worst failures, "Kin," "Parting in Harlem," and "Village Hangover," seem to have been put in for structural reasons without becoming part of the architecture.) Whether the imposition of external form is responsible for the emergence of a whole pattern in these poems, I do not know. The interesting thing is that we have the form and we have

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the pattern, while elsewhere in the books under review we have neither. It is at least suggestive, that had Mr. Wheelwright everywhere mastered his form, then his pattern would everywhere have been clear. But diagnosis is not cure; and it may be the other way round. None of us to-day, none even with the full strength of Christian (or Marxist) belief, can take full advantage—full nourishment—of our heritage, whether of enlivening form or enduring pattern, without extraordinary and almost impossible luck—like that of Thomas Mann in his novels. Without such luck, without that gift, the struggle is too much to the individual and against the society in which he lives. Success seems to involve concession to oneself as well as to society. One is the product as well as the victim of the damage of one's lifetime. We are in the predicament of the protagonist in Mr. Wheelwright's sonnet "Sanct"; protestant to the last drop.

We know the Love the Father bears the Son
is a third Mask and that the Three form One.
We also know, machines and dynamos
—Preservers in motion; Destroyers in repose—
like visions of wheeled eyes the addict sees
are gods, not fashioned in our images.

Then let us state the unknown in the known:
The mechanism of our friendship, grown
transcendent over us, maintains a being
by seeing us when we grow lax in seeing,
although without our sight it could not be.
(One states, one does not solve, a mystery.)
This human Trinity is comprehended
when doubt of its divinity is ended.

Not only protestant, but also heretical.

Turn by an inward act upon the world!
An innocence like our Creator's faith
is younger than my doubt. You give it birth
who, seeing evil less veiling than clear rain,
see truth in thought as through a lens of air.

That is, both inimical and foreign; trying for the scope of the normal rather than the closeness of the average. I fear that the reader of this review may have difficulty with Mr. Wheelwright and none with Dr. Williams; yet I am certain that when he finds he has understood Mr. Wheelwright, and enjoyed him, he will understand much better what he misses as well as what he enjoys in Dr. Williams. There is room for both poets.

AMERICANS ACCURSED

MAULE'S CURSE: Seven Studies in the History of American Obscurantism. By Yvor Winters. New Directions. $3.

Van Wyck Brooks used to tell us that literature in America was the victim of a divorce between our general cultural heritage, which was obsolete, derivative, and weakly idealistic, and our daily experience, which was

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grimly modern and utilitarian. Attracted towards one extreme or another, literature emerged as either "Highbrow" or "Lowbrow," but seldom as an integrated expression of American life as a whole. Now Yvor Winters is likewise concerned with the limitations of the national literature; he, too, has a formula for explaining them; and at first glance his formula looks like Mr. Brooks'. Let us give it in his own words. "His dilemma,"—Winters is speaking of Hawthorne—"the choice between abstractions inadequate or irrelevant to experience on the one hand, and experience on the other as far as practicable unilluminated by understanding, is tragically characteristic of the history of this country; only a few scattered individuals, at the cost of inordinate labor, and often impermanently, have achieved the permeation of human experience by a consistent moral understanding which results in wisdom and great art."

Now Brooks' "Highbrow" and "Lowbrow" were social categories; but Winters' "experience" and "understanding" have a strictly ethical reference. We are, he declares, a race of writers committed to the struggle for a *moral philosophy* which shall reinforce and direct our inherited *moral sense.* And because most of us have failed, our literature is on the whole structurally formless and ethically obscure.

Winters' earlier book, *Primitivism and Decadence,* developed similar ideas in connection with contemporary American poetry. *Maule's Curse* is a study of New England's intellectual traditions, and attempts to account historically for the "dilemma" we have just described. Calvinism, says Winters, was ultimately responsible for the creative difficulties of America. It imposed upon New England a schematic and dogmatic conception of human nature, in place of "the patient study of the minutiae of moral behavior long encouraged by the Catholic tradition." But Calvinism was crude and contradictory and broke down as American civilization matured. And presently Americans were left with a high-developed conscience, a strong predisposition to view life allegorically—but with no authoritative moral system to sustain these inherited tendencies. Consequently the writers of 19th century America found themselves in a quandary. If a few of them (Emily Dickinson, Jones Very) inhabited "crumbling islands" of Puritan culture capable of supporting the creative life, however meagerly, the great majority either fell "victim" to "romanticism" (Poe, Emerson) or consumed themselves in trying to understand a world to which they had lost the key (the later Hawthorne; Melville in *Pierre,* James and Cooper in part).

Maule's Curse is a serious book addressed to serious questions of American culture; but its author works in a rather intuitive and scattered way. His transparent style, his emphatic self-confidence, imply a consistency of argument which does not really exist. We would have little trouble, I think, in showing that *Maule's Curse* embodies an extraordinary instance of the reductive fallacy: it reduces the whole complex problem of American creation to a problem simply of morality. Moreover, it divorces New England literature from American literature as a whole, and American literature from the totality of Western culture. The results are in some cases exceedingly curious. We are left with the impression, for example, that romanticism is an alien product imported jointly by Emerson, who was a "fraud," and Poe, who was an "obscurantist," a verbal trickster, and a man without any "background." Again, we are asked to accept as valid for America as a whole certain generalizations which rest upon an analysis of but one region: New

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England. But where are Whitman, Mark Twain, Dreiser: the Westerners, the plebeians, the men of the city? To have introduced such writers into *Maule's Curse* would have been to undermine its argument. For although the New England writers were unquestionably obsessed with problems of conscience, and do, therefore, lend some credibility to Winters' thesis, the other writers were all, in varying degree, dissenters from the hegemony of conscience. These last were looking for something else altogether: for a modern, a realistic, a social, even a scientific philosophy. And if, like the New Englanders, they were also in part "frustrated," then the failures of American literature can only be explained by reference to conditions common to all schools and all periods. Mr. Winters would probably say of the non-Puritan writers what he says of Poe, that they are not genuine artists; that their importance as historical phenomena is a consideration "anterior to the poem, not in the poem," and is therefore irrelevant to criticism. But in that case we should have to reply as follows: "In your 'Foreword' you announce *Maule's Curse* as a work of historical criticism, but quite abruptly you swing from the historical perspective to the narrowly esthetic. You set up as a theorist of the national culture but you turn out to be a sectarian of New England."

But if we forget the larger ambitions of *Maule's Curse,* if we overlook such obscure expressions as "moral illumination," "the nature of moral truth," etc., if we read the book simply for its specific criticism of individual writers, we shall find it exceptionally good. The essay on Emily Dickinson makes a point that very much needed to be made: that "her best poems . . . can never be isolated certainly and defensibly from her defects"—which are defects springing from her "countrified eccentricity." There is a study of Melville which quite transforms our notions of that writer, showing him to have been, not, as commonly supposed, a "transcendentalist in oilskins," but fundamentally a counter-romantic; and the analysis of *Moby Dick* is probably the best single item in *Maule's Curse.* Winters is a formidable analyst of the structural properties of literature; he is also, on occasion, a very perceptive literary historian. One hopes that the analyst and the historian in him will prevail over the moral sectarian.

F. W. DUPEE.

WHITEHEAD'S METAPHYSICS

MODES OF THOUGHT. By Alfred North Whitehead. Macmillan. $2.50.

Professor Whitehead once defined philosophy as the critique of abstractions. Many of his readers then understood him to say that the task of philosophy is the analysis of concepts, especially those employed in the sciences, in order to exhibit their specific functions, their mode of introduction, and their relation to the materials of every-day experience. Professor Whitehead himself took part in such a critique, and in a notable series of books and articles indicated how abstract terms occurring in theoretical physics, such as "dimensionless point" and "durationless instant," were to be interpreted in terms of familiar procedures. He brought to this task a

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mastery of mathematics and physics and a magnificent logical equipment; and for a few years he was a recognized leader among those who, sceptical of the claims made for the great systems of philosophy as sources of knowledge, hoped to make of philosophy an instrument of genuine clarification.

Professor Whitehead is still engaged in the critique of abstractions, but not in the sense which his many admirers found in his earlier writings. He is now preoccupied with adding one more system to the metaphysical speculations of traditional philosophy, and his critique of the concepts of science consists in using the latest set of scientific terms either as weapons to attack "mechanical science" or as building-blocks to fortify his own vision of the universe. The substance of his present views, shorn of their details, their suggestiveness, and their subtle nuances, is as follows: Classical natural science relied upon the materials of sense-experience for its interpretation of nature; and it took for granted that nature was composed of permanent things, each enduring self-identically and moving about in empty space. As a consequence, nature was thought of as a system of isolated facts, severally and jointly without "ultimate meaning." For example, Newton assumed that certain forces operated between bodies, but no reason can be found in the Newtonian concepts of mass and motion as to why bodies should be connected by such stresses; in Professor Whitehead's words, "Newton left no hint why in the nature of things there should be any stresses at all." But such a "mechanical science" is not a satisfactory formulation of the nature *of* things, and the reasons science has neglected to supply must be found in other ways. They can be found, however, only if we come to regard nature not as something dead, but as something characterized by the traits of living things or organisms. Now living things exhibit three characteristics: individual acts of "immediate self-enjoyment" (or "feeling"); a creative advance into the future, in which unrealized potentialities become actual and fuse into new unities of feeling; and an "appetition" or "aim," which selects and rejects from the infinite set of alternative potentialities and so involves "the entertainment of the purely ideal so as to be directive of the creative advance." But a natural science which is wedded to the assumption that the materials of sense supply the sole basis for an interpretation of nature, can never discover these traits in nature; and if we are going to be sensitive to the "really real" things about us we must admit the vague but more adequate evidence of our feelings and emotions. On the other hand, Professor Whitehead maintains that modern science has been compelled to abandon the preconceptions of classical physics: space and matter conceived in the manner of Newton have been dethroned as the fundamental notions; and process, conceived as a complex activity with internal relations between its various factors, has come to be the fundamental category. Physical science has come to regard the spatial universe as a field of force or incessant activity, with matter identified as energy; and this constant energizing can be made intelligible only by interpreting it in terms of the categories appropriate for understanding life. Nature is thus not a meaningless system of detached elements, but must be construed as aiming at the realization of feelings or values.

To the present reviewer Professor Whitehead's discourse carries no conviction. It does not supply us with knowledge, because knowledge is not achieved by simply giving names or labels. When, for example, a biologist

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"explains" the development of an organism by invoking a "vital force" or "entelechy," he has not given us information about the conditions for the development of the organism. He has not given us knowledge, not because entelechies can not be observed, (neither can atoms nor electrons), but because he has asserted no determinate and controllable *relations* between the presence of the alleged entelechy and the stages of the organic development. Such a biologist has simply given a *name* to the fact of development, and he has indulged in a performance which is dangerous in proportion to the conviction it may produce that something has been proved. To my mind Professor Whitehead's procedure is like that of such a biologist. In declaring that nature is alive, that its various segments are characterized by feelings and aims, has he not simply given a name to something he believes exists, without stating what the determinate connections are between the occurrence of such feelings and something else? Is there any reliable method with whose help evidence can be obtained bearing upon the truth or falsity of Professor Whitehead's system? Since he maintains that in philosophy insight is everything and that philosophy is either self-evident or it is not philosophy, he may perhaps retort that if his critic is blind nothing will make him see the obvious. But such a critic will at least be permitted to reply that to accept Professor Whitehead's vision as something self-evident is a miracle of faith to which he is unequal; and that in fact Professor Whitehead himself advances his system as a hypothesis, to be supported or rejected on evidence in a manner comparable with that employed in the natural sciences. But what is that evidence? If the occurrence of stresses is to be "explained" by feelings and appetitions, one would expect that *differences* in stresses or the non-occurrence of determinate stresses would be the consequences of determinate differences in these alleged feelings and appetitions. If, however, feelings and appetitions are *pervasive* traits of *all* things, if differences between feelings and appetitions are either not analyzed or are imputed *solely* on the ground of the stresses they are invoked to explain, is not their explanatory power an illusion? Is the existence of stresses "explained" or made "intelligible" by calling them forms of appetition or types of creative advances into the future? Can Professor Whitehead tell us "why in the nature of things there should be any stresses at all"? Or is it not the case that he has simply accepted the existence of such stresses and then baptized them with a fancy and misleading name? And is not the "entertainment of the purely ideal" as *directive* of the creative advance into the future on par with the biologist's entelechy—a mere *naming* of a fact and not a theoretical explanation of it?

Professor Whitehead claims in support of his metaphysics of process the conclusion of contemporary physics. It is doubtless presumptuous for one who is not a physicist to try to tell Professor Whitehead what these conclusions are. But is it really the case that modern physics proves that the spatial universe is a field of force? Is not rather the import of the general theory of relativity that forces can be *eliminated* in the study of the behavior of matter? And is it really the case that *matter* has been identified with energy and therefore with activity? Physicists will tell you, and their monographs and text-books will confirm their statements, that it is the *mass* of a body (not the matter of a body, whatever "matter" may mean) which is a function of its velocity with respect to a specified frame of reference; and

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that the mass of a body is a property ascribed to it with the help of the laws of motion. They will also tell you that energy is *not* activity, though it is certainly compatible with activity; they will tell you that "energy" is an abstract term representing an invariant of certain systems, and not a *quality* of a physical field. Is not Professor Whitehead therefore taking the conclusions of modern physics completely out of their relevant contexts when he uses them as lumber for his metaphysical system? Is he not simply employing the *words* which modern physicists employ, but in senses which bear no likeness to the meanings which these words possess within the scientific enterprise? Professor Whitehead makes frequent use of a so-called principle of continuity, according to which all of nature is "continuous with" the qualities occurring in the human scene. It is not easy to discover just exactly what that "principle" asserts or what the evidence for it is; but it is not hard to see that if it is once invoked, there is no place at which one is compelled to stop in attributing to anything whatsoever, however remote and inaccessible, the traits known to occur in specific contexts under very specific conditions. Can we seriously believe that the imaginative flights made possible by the use of such a principle are improvements upon the less spectacular but safer methods for securing knowledge which obtain in the natural sciences?

There is no space here to consider Professor Whitehead's remarkable pronouncements on logic and mathematics, or his rejection of the conclusions of a century of minute research in these domains. They are pronouncements which, if made to him while writing *Principia Mathematica,* he would unquestionably have dismissed as irrelevant and as based upon misunderstandings. Professor Whitehead accepts as an important maxim of philosophizing that "we must be systematic, but we should keep our system open". The extent to which he has succeeded in systematizing his insights will no doubt remain a theme for debate among professional philosophers for a long time. There is little question, however, that he has kept his system wide open. He has found room within it for most of the occult powers which critical minds, bravely taking their stand upon the method of science Professor Whitehead finds repeated occasion to castigate, have with so much effort learned to exclude from the theory of nature. Remembering the great promise of his earlier writings, his mastery of the natural sciences, and his remarkable sensitivity to the varied aspects of experience, this reviewer concludes with infinite regret that those interested in a critique of abstractions intended to illuminate their function and structure, will not find it in his latest book.

ERNEST NAGEL

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA—AFTER MARX

A PENNY FOR THE POOR. By Bertolt Brecht. Translated from the German by Desmond Vesey; with verses translated by Christopher Isherwood. Hillman-Curl. $2.50.

Brecht was first attracted to John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* because it seemed to offer him a better dramatic legend for the expression of his

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obsessing theme than any he himself could invent at the time. When he adopted the legend for his own opera his new-found adherence to communism was not yet sufficiently clarified to prevent him from exploiting it in the direction of his old nihilism. Thus, while the underworld is represented as the truest and frankest expression of the society whose hypocritical rules it disregards, its hero MacHeath, who kings it in this quintessential milieu of capitalism, is celebrated not only for his frankness, but also for his *opposition.* This unconscious contradiction, given piquancy by Brecht's talent as a poet and accompanied by Weill's ambiguous music, was responsible in no small measure for the opera's success, which came at a time of deflation in political attitudes, when the rejection of bourgeois standards went hand in hand with the acceptance of the concrete bourgeois world. But this was in 1929.

In 1934, when he came to write a novel on the basis of the legend, Brecht's communism had sunk deeper roots and taken more complete possession of his consciousness. The object of attack is more clearly defined now as capitalist society in the specific. The underworld is no longer cut off cleanly from the remainder of society as its illegal expression, but merges with it imperceptibly behind the veil of public hypocrisy; and the action now takes place in a shadowy transitional milieu peopled by lumpenproletariat, racketeers, shady speculators, coney-catchers, future criminals, beggars, bohemians without pretensions—in short, the refuse of all the better organized areas of society. The scene is London during the Boer War—chosen perhaps because in time and place it is the historical apogee of capitalism—yet in so far as faithfulness to background is concerned, it might just as well be capitalism among the Yahoos. MacHeath is no longer a cute desperado, but a grim racketeer who operates a chain of stores with stolen goods and succeeds so well in crushing competition that he is able to force his way into respectable financial institutions and pose as a pillar of society in the manner of F. Donald Coster, of whom he is the necessary archetype. Peachum, the best-drawn character in the book, remains the bourgeois bonhomme, the timid and rapacious family father whose most intense emotional and physical sensations are caused by money. The action unrolls in a long drawn and detailed complication of knavery involving MacHeath's grandiose schemes for power and position, and the struggles for survival of his victims, who are equally villainous, but lack his daring and frankness. In spite of the machinery of commercial transactions with all their faithful details, the novel makes little attempt to be realistic in the common sense of the word, for Brecht intends, not to draw a picture, but to give a dramatic definition of capitalist society, showing it as it is *ideally*, not as it appears or as it is experienced.

For this, as well as for other reasons, the novel constitutes an experiment. Brecht, like many other contemporary poets who feel that they have to prove themselves in a novel, has approached the form with restlessness and dissatisfaction and has attempted to fill it with a new content. He breaks away from the premise most basic to the novel as we have come to know it, namely, that it shall deal with actual experience, and instead transfers attention from the real to the ideal, from actual behavior to the operative patterns or formulas of behavior. What we are to read is not a sample of life under capitalism, but the paradigm, the non-allegorical parable, of all life under capitalism. An intention such as this can be fulfilled in literature only

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in the form of the morality play or tale—"Pilgrim's Progress" is the best example—and a morality tale is exactly what *A Penny for the Poor* is.

But Brecht also wants to make propaganda in more emphatic terms, he wants to shock the reader in order to make sure his point is not missed; and so he satirizes what he exposes. He will show the unrelieved viciousness of a world in which the fundamental assumptions of bourgeois society are driven to their final conclusions. The result, however, must be an absurd world, its absurdity following from the strictness of its logic. The action, therefore, proceeds, not in accordance with the internal necessities of character and verisimilitude, but in obedience to the external logic of a set scheme that overrides the former. This is well and good in a play or in some other short form, but in a longer form like the novel it is unendurable, for an absurd world can only contain absurd characters, and absurd characters produce nothing but farce, whether it is grim farce, as in the present case, or merry farce. And farce palls. After a hundred pages or so, by which time the reader has grasped his point, Brecht's novel becomes something like a stage farce from which the voices and gestures of actors have been excluded, or like a succession of subtitles from a silent movie, which we refuse to believe until we see. Continued the length of four hundred pages in a manner that strains at every point to make its gratuitous irony clear—presumably for the benefit of the untutored reader whom Brecht wants to attract to serious literature—the book ends by becoming nerve-wracking.

In its original German, at least, the novel is to some extent redeemed by Brecht's virtuosity as a master of language. Scattered through the book are splendidly executed passages of irony in a prose which for its firmness and sensitivity might serve as a model to any writer of German. The English translation, much too literal, has caught almost nothing of this, and very little more of Brecht's "collage" compositions in cliché and cant phrase, for which he has an extraordinary ear. Isherwood's versions of Brecht's own poems which are set at the chapter heads are brave efforts, but inadequate since they coarsen Brecht's colloquialisms to the point of banality, something which is entirely absent from the German.

CLEMENT GREENBERG

LIGHT VERSE OMNIBUS

THE OXFORD BOOK OF LIGHT VERSE. Chosen by W. H. Auden. Oxford. $3.00.

This is in some respects an excellent anthology. Auden's definition of "light verse" is so wide that it permits him to include "serious light verse," and he uses the term so that it means merely all verse which is not obscure. However, most of the poems in the book are characterized by the intention of creating mirth, and the poems by Blake and Yeats which are hardly light in any sense are too good to make one concerned about definitions. The book is also rather weak on American verse and contains a diluted version of "Frankie and Johnny," not the one in E. E. Cummings' "Him," which among its other virtues concludes with a stupendous castration scene at

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Johnny's funeral. Curiously enough, none of Cummings' light verse is included, but the inclusion of Swift's wonderful poem on his own death is enough to make the book worth the price of admission.

In his introduction to the book, W. H. Auden is engaged in pointing out a serious moral about the relationship of the poet to society. "The more homogeneous a society, the closer the artist is to everyday life, the easier it is for him to communicate what he perceives. . . . The more unstable a society, and the more detached from it the artist, the clearer he can see, but the harder it is for him to communicate it to others." The first situation is favorable to the writing of light verse; the latter leads to the difficulty of modern poetry, although light verse continues to be written and becomes an expression of "the Unconscious." But when Auden cites various examples, the gap between such general statements and the complexity of a given poet betrays him. Browning is mentioned as a poet who "in a less socially specialized period might well have been the easiest poet of his generation, instead of the most difficult." What was lacking? "Without a secure place in society, without an intimate relation between himself and his audience, without . . . those conditions which make for the writing of Light Verse, the poet finds it difficult to grow beyond a certain point." How far short this explanation falls of being adequate is shown by considering Tennyson, Browning's exact contemporary (they were born and died within three years of each other), who enjoyed a secure place in society, an intimate relation between himself and his audience, and yet found it difficult to grow beyond a certain point. In fact, his security and intimacy were what prevented his growth. The difficulty with this and other statements in Auden's introduction arises from the fact that he has started with the social generalization and then examined the poet, rather than derived the generalization from a consideration of the poets of a given period.

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

LETTERS

Note on "We Are From Kronstadt"

Paris

August 29, 1938.

Dear Comrade Macdonald: — I read with the liveliest interest your pages on the Soviet cinema in P. R. Perhaps I can fill up a lacuna. The Stalinist falsification of history is shameless in two ways — intellectually and morally. The latter I myself experienced, with a feeling of outrage, when I attended in Brussels, in November of 1936, soon after leaving the USSR, a showing of *We Are from Kronstadt*.

This film pretends to recreate certain episodes in the defense of Leningrad-Petrograd in '19, apparently November '19. Some of its scenes were successful, and others moved me anyway, since I myself lived through those days. Zinoviev was then leader of the Petrograd Soviet; the two agitators — the principal characters in the film — were Evdokimov and Zorine; the rear was defended by the Cheka Commissar, Bakaev; an old anarchist, Chatov, played the leading part in the army; and finally, it was Trotsky who saved the city, practically lost at the time he arrived on the scene. (I described all this in my novel, *Ville Conquise*.) And this epic film, dedicated to the memory of the men who took part in this great event, mentioned not a single one of these heroes — for the good reason that almost all of them had been shot as traitors. Zinoviev, Evdokimov, and Bakaev went

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in August, 1936. Zorine disappeared in prison somewhat earlier, and I am convinced he is no longer alive. I do not know what has become of Chatov but it is probable that he has shared the fate of his companions in arms.

As I watched the screen, I felt I was looking at a ballet of ghosts, or, better, at a masquerade of the executed. Such cynicism would suffice to ruin a masterpiece – if one can conceive a masterpiece being born in such a social environment . . . .

Fraternally yours,

VICTOR SERGE.

P. S. Let me add that the less prominent survivors of those days were *all* in prison (I think most of them have been shot since 1936). To name a few: Hessen, Gorbatchev, Guertik, Federov, Kostina, Alexandra Bronstein . . .

A Letter from Princeton

Princeton, N. J.

December 29, 1938.

Sirs:

Dr. Thomas Mann has asked me to thank you for sending him a copy of the "Partisan Review's" fall issue. He is very pleased by the interest you have shown in his work, and is looking forward to reading Harold Rosenberg's article in your winter issue.

As to the "Reflections on a non-political man" let me say that Dr. Mann, although fond of Goethe who is the subject of one of his new novels, has in his personal and spiritual attitude very little of the "Olympian" thunderer to be approached only with "trepidation", as you put it. There is no reason whatever for trembling, unless the approach, or attack, be made in an unfair way. After reading the whole fall issue with great respect for the high standards of the contributors, I hesitate to believe that this particular comment is malicious in intent; I rather prefer to believe that your author—with the best and sincerest intentions—sometimes misinterprets Thomas Mann's peculiarly ironical and complex style. How otherwise could this author, when mentioning "Fiorenza", have overlooked the subtle derision of the German General Staff on page 46 of "A Sketch of my Life," with its closing line about the officer who addressed Thomas Mann as Herr War-comrade: "and really the vicissitudes of the war hit me as hard as they did these people" . . . (in Brussels, far behind the trenches).

Your author does not seem to understand Mann's attitude towards the war. However, if one carefully reads the whole paragraph on page 45 of the same sketch, one will see at once that Thomas Mann has no liking for war and warfare; but with his deep sense of duty he feels regret that his physical unfitness should forbid him to share the sacrifices of his people in the hour of danger.

His war for the "moral and metaphysical, not political and social traditions" of German culture he fought in the "Reflections of a non-political man". The author of this book is as much an imperialist as Georges Sorel—in his "Reflections on violence"—is an advocate of bomb-throwing terrorists with whiskers. On the contrary, Thomas Mann tries to defend the German soul against the onrush of "politics" in general; against a plutocratic and mechanized civilization with its spiritual representative, the "Zivilisationsliterat", who afterwards got the gentler features of Settembrini in the "Magic Mountain".

When Thomas Mann wrote this book he was a patriot of Germany as he still is, even if he has to denounce the Germany of today. When, during the Czechoslovakian crisis, he advocated military resistance "to the fullest extent" against Hitler, he did so in the strong belief—shared recently by the eminent apostle of peace, Lord Cecil—that Hitler was bluffing, and would not have risked war if only the democratic powers were firmly resolved to stop him.

May I ask you in turn two questions: (1) What has given your author the idea of Thomas Mann's advocating "the status quo in certain capitalist nations"? I suggest he look up in "the Coming Victory of Democracy" pages 57 and 58 where Dr. Mann is very outspoken in his dislike of a laissez-faire capitalism, a political democracy without economic democracy. (2) Will you please indicate me what are "the most extreme and reckless polit-

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ical positions" which Thomas Mann "is constantly taking", and the "political doctrines of the most dubious kind" to which he is "lending his prestige"?

By answering these questions you would oblige very much

yours faithfully,

JAMES H. MEISEL,
Secretary

We think that Harold Rosenberg's article, printed elsewhere in this issue, answers in general the points raised by Mr. Meisel, but there are a few specific points we should like to make, quite briefly. We do not doubt that Thomas Mann "has no liking for war and warfare," nor did we intend to imply, in our editorial, that he had. Almost no one likes war, or wants it—until it comes. Nor do we doubt Mr. Mann's patriotism—quite the contrary, indeed! As for Mr. Meisel's concluding questions, we would reply to the first that to be against laissez-faire capitalism and for "economic democracy" hardly means that he is not, as we said, "for the *status quo* in certain capitalist nations." Our own New Deal, which is in power and is a capitalist government, has much the same position as has Mr. Mann. To Mr. Meisel's second question, we can only say that our editorial itself indicated in some detail the "extreme and reckless political positions" Mr. Mann has adopted in the past. His *carte blanche* to German imperialism in the last war and to the Weimar Republic afterward (a shift which involved him, for example, in sharp polemics with Spengler, whose position he himself had held not so long before), his faith in pacifism in 1933 and his equally sweeping faith in an ared crusade for democracy today—these seem to us to justify the adjectives we used.—The Editors.

Allen Tate on "The Fathers"

University of North Carolina,
Greensboro, N. C.
November 22, 1938.

Dear Mr. Rahv:

I have read with great interest the current issue of the Partisan: it is a very fine number, the best issue of an American periodical that I've seen in some time.

Trilling's review of my novel, although I don't agree with his analysis of the subject, or "fable", is the ablest and most interesting that I have seen. Trilling's approach to the book proves conclusively that it is possible for a critic to examine a work whose author holds fundamentally opposite views, and yet convince that author, by moderation and intelligence, that the critic is disinterested. If the Partisan Review can maintain that attitude, it will win the respect of all parties without yielding the essentially Marxian position that it has assumed. My objection hitherto to Marxian critics has been that they are, with few exceptions, both ignorant and unintelligent.—I've been trying to see why Trilling thinks my fable an indictment of the Old South; I think it may as easily be seen as a justification of it, quite apart from the style. It is an indictment only in the sense that it is an indictment of the necessary limitations of human nature. Any highly organized society, Marxian or any other sort, could develop the tensions that give the dynamic force to my fable. Trilling seems to assume that that is not true, and with that assumption I part company with him; for he seems to me to commit himself to a kind of absolute that he is a little puzzled in not finding in me—that is, belief in a social and political absolute. He is the first critic I've had who seems actually to have read what I've written about the South, and he knows that I have an awareness of the South's defects past and present; but he cannot understand my interest in the subject, since I don't find a political absolute. In making an historical comparison of the South with the other sections of the country, I've always felt that the ante-bellum values had a good deal to offer us, not in terms of an ideally perfect society, but rather in terms of what we are likely to get in fact. That is the gist of my attitude about the South. I've always felt that the American Marxists approach the question not on the basis of what actually was, or is likely to be, but from the viewpoint of what they want; and I've felt that with critics holding that advantage I could not compete.—So—to conclude a too

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lengthy commentary—I see no discrepancy between the plot of my novel and the tone of the style. It seems to me that my characters, under the circumstances, acted with the greatest human dignity in a situation that called forth both the best and the worst in human nature—even the worst being relatively free of the meanness that afflicts the bourgeois order of today. The bourgeois is like Mother Goose's son Jack—not very good and not very bad; having a certain mediocrity of all qualities. Thus one justification of the people in my book would be that they were driven to the extremes of experience—to good and evil; but there I know that I enter a region where no Marxian will have the patience to follow me. Sincerely, ALLEN TATE.

We realize that Mr. Tate's is an informal letter. But we want to point out that his phrase, "the necessary limitations of human nature," suggests that he rejects one kind of "absolute" only to embrace another: an absolute of *limitation*. Human nature and society depend, we think, on the degree of man's mastery over his material environment. But the scientific basis of in Marxism precludes the admission of absolutes, either of perfectionism or *im*perfectionism. And so we feel that the decay of the Old Smith which Mr. Tate's novel describes was the product of historical factors rather than of any "necessary limitations of human nature."— THE EDITORS.

Leon Trotsky to André Breton

My Dear Breton:

With all my heart I congratulate Diego Rivera and yourself on the creation of the FIARI—an international federation of truly revolutionary and truly independent artists. And why not add—of *true* artists? It is time, it is high time! The entire globe is becoming a dirty and reeking imperialist barracks. The heroes of democracy, with the inimitable Daladier at their head, make every effort to ape the heroes of fascism (which will not prevent them from landing in a fascist concentration camp). The duller and more ignorant the dictator, the more he feels called upon to prescribe the development of science, philosophy and art. The sheep-like servility of the intelligentsia is, in turn, a not unimportant sign of the rottenness of contemporary society. France is no exception.

Why speak of the Aragons, the Ehrenburgs and other *petites canailles?* Why name those gentlemen (death has not absolved them) who compose, with equal enthusiasm, biographies of Christ and Stalin. Let us also pass over the pitiful, not to say ignoble, decline of Romain Rolland. . . . But one feels too strongly to ignore the case of Malraux. I followed his first literary steps with much interest. At that time there was already a strong element of pose and affectation in him. His pretentiously cold studies of heroism in other lands often made one uneasy. But it was impossible to deny him talent. With undeniable power he aimed at the very peak of human emotion—of heroic struggle, self-sacrifice, extreme anguish. One might expect—and I, for one, earnestly hoped—that the sense of revolutionary heroism would enter more profoundly into his being, would purify him of pose and make him the major poet of an epoch of disasters. But what in fact happened? The artist became a reporter for the GPU, a purveyor of bureaucratic heroism in prudently proportioned slices, just so long and so wide. (They have no third dimension).

During the Civil War I was obliged to fight stubbornly against the vague or lying military reports submitted by officers who tried to hide their errors, failures and defeats in a torrent of generalities. The present productions of Malraux are just such lying reports from the fields of battle (Germany, Spain, etc). However, the lie is more repugnant dressed up in artistic form. The fate of Malraux is symbolic for a whole stratum of writers, almost for a whole generation. It is the generation of those who lie from pretended

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"friendship" for the October revolution.

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The struggle for revolutionary ideas in art must begin once again with the struggle for artistic *truth,* not in terms of any single school, but in terms of *the immutable faith of the artist in his own inner self.* Without this there is no art. "You shall not lie!"—that is the formula of salvation.

Properly understood, the FIARI is not an esthetic or political school and cannot become one. But FIARI can oxidize the atmosphere in which artists breath and create. In our epoch of convulsive reaction, of cultural decline and return to savagery, truly independent creation cannot but be revolutionary by its very nature, for it cannot but seek an outlet from intolerable social suffocation. But art as a whole, and each artist in particular, seeks this outlet in ways proper to himself—not relying upon orders from outside, but rejecting such orders and heaping scorn upon all who submit to them. To encourage such attitudes among the best circles of artists—this is the task of the FIARI. I firmly believe that its name will enter history.

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Coyoacan, D. F., Mexico
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Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Nancy G. Macdonald, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the PARTISAN REVIEW and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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